Oda Nobuna no Yabou Volume9

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著者

春日みかげ（かすが みかげ）

最近、あとがきに取材旅行のネタを書くと、それだけであとがきが埋まってしまうようになり、やや困りはじめています。「半兵衛のキャラクター誕生秘話とか書きたいんですよねー」とか言いながら、今日も高野山に取材で来ています。

イラスト

みやま零（みやま ぜろ）

春日先生から取材旅行の度にお土産にいただいたご当地戦国武将Tシャツが充実して、1年のうち8割くらいの日は部屋着に着用しています。今のところ最も着心地の良いシャツは小田原土産の「北条5代」です。氏康さんがデレています。

GA文庫
か-07-09

織田信奈の野望9

春日みかげ

GA文庫

「はあ、はあ、はあ。七難八苦です」

竹中半兵衛

山中鹿之助

前鬼

織田家とその仲間

織田信奈

尾張の姫大名。上洛して「天下布武」のために邁進している。安土に巨城を建築中。てばさきが大好物。

親族衆

松永久秀

大和国主。「蠍」。今は亡き斎藤道三とは旧知の仲。

津田信澄

「勘十郎」。信奈の弟。妻はお市。

織田家臣団

明智光秀

「十兵衛」。りこうもの。近江坂本城主。畿内を統率。丹波を攻略中。

滝川一益

「左近」。甲賀出身の幼い忍者姫武将。伊勢国主。

柴田勝家

「六」。織田家最強の猛将。巨乳。脳筋。越前国主。

丹羽長秀

「万千代」。信奈のお姉さん役。若狭国主。

前田犬千代

信奈の元小姓。無口な槍の達人。

松平家

松平元康

「竹千代」。気が小さい三河の姫大名。信奈の妹分。

将軍

今川義元

駿河の名族。信奈に降伏して将軍となったが、足利義昭の登場で微妙な立場に。

黒田官兵衛

播磨姫路城主。竹中半兵衛と並ぶ天才軍師。宇喜多直家に捕らわれて幽閉されている。

仕官

相良良晴

現代日本から姫武将だらけの戦国時代にタイムスリップしてきた高校生。戦国ゲーム仕込みの知識で信奈を補佐、北近江二十万石の大名となった。

相良軍団

ねね

良晴の義理の妹。おりこうだがおねしょ癖あり。

蜂須賀五右衛門

良晴に仕える謎の幼女忍者。30文字以上喋るとかむ。

竹中半兵衛

良晴を補佐する天才少女軍師。病で余命いくばくもない。

前鬼

半兵衛に仕える皮肉屋の式神。その正体は実は……。

反織田家

足利義昭

足利幕府復興の野望に燃える流浪の新将軍。今川義元を担ぐ信奈と敵対。

吉川元春
小早川隆景

中国の覇者・毛利家を支える双子姉妹。吉川は猛将、小早川は知将。足利義昭を上洛させるために織田家に宣戦布告。

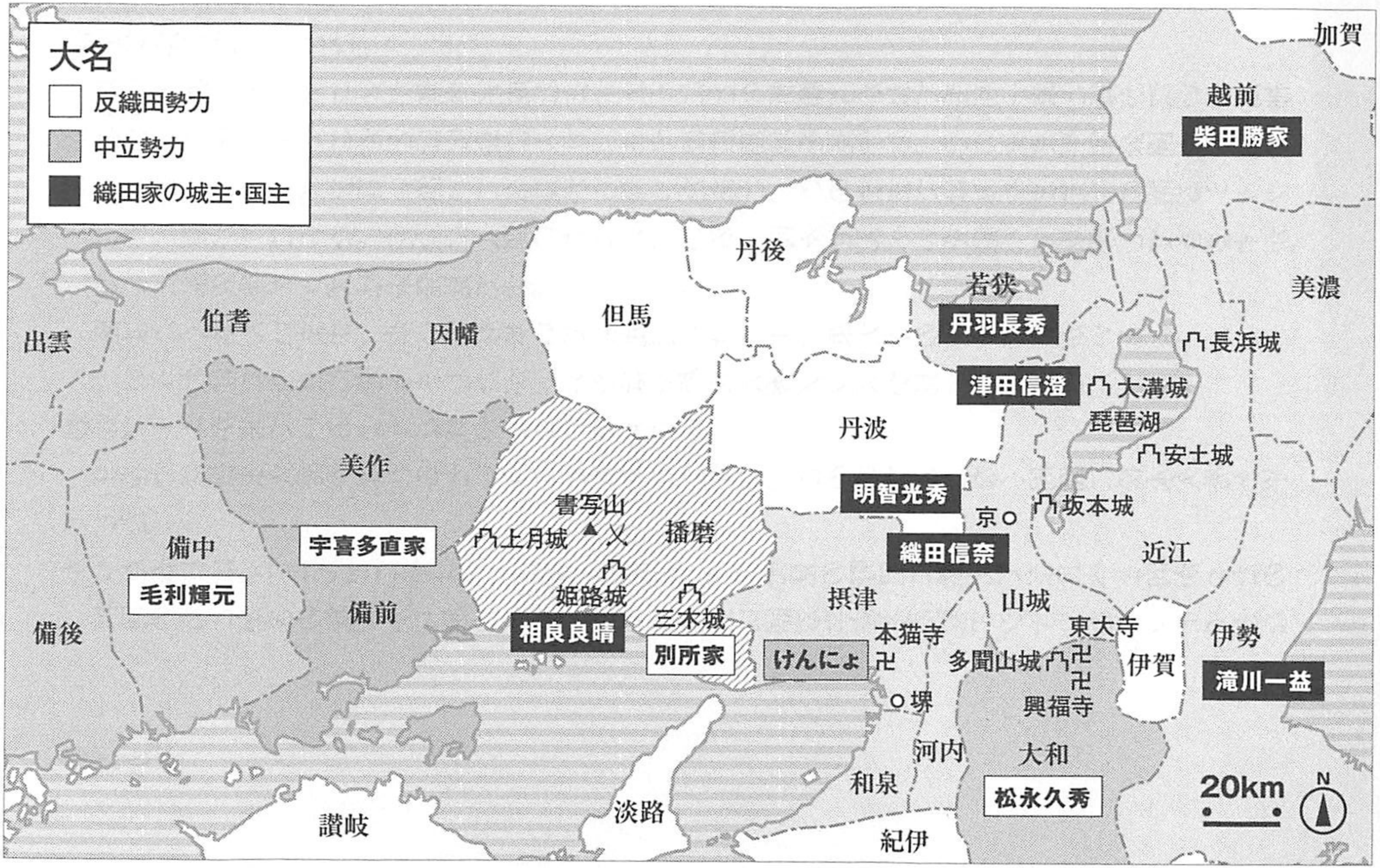
宇喜多直家

「姫武将殺し」。毛利家に服従中の外様大名。特技は暗殺・謀殺。

近衛前久

やまと御所の関白。信奈の追い落としをはかる。

MAP



地図作成：有限会社 地図屋もりそん

Chapter 1 : The rout of Harima (Part one)

"I've heard that Takenaka Hanbei-sama has contracted an illness"

"Hanbei, huh?"

"Yeah"

The location is within Harima's Mt Shozan, the underground prison where the Mori clan's vanguard, the Ukita army's main camp is stationed. Originally planning to persuade Ukita Naoie but was instead being captured and imprisoned here, Kuroda Kanbei was whispering softly to the two visitors who were separated from her by the iron bars.

Kuroda Kanbei was born in Harima, yet in spite of her youth had already become the master of Himeji castle.

Furthermore, due to her extraordinary talent, she, along with Mino's Takenaka Hanbei were both called the 'Twin Genius Strategists".

But now she was simply a pitiful girl struggling against hunger and thirst while being confined in an underground prison.

"Here, have some onigiri Kanbei-sama"

Concealed from Naoie, the girl, who just from her manner of speaking and someone who looks like her servant beside her, one could tell that she had a good upbringing, brought food and water for Kanbei.

Were it not for the girl who brought food and water together with news of the outside world from time to time, Kanbei would have probably reached her physical and mental limit a long time ago.

If the Sagara Corps did not hand the newly joined Yamanaka Shikanosuke from the old Amago Clan, over to Ukita Naoie, Kanbei would have been executed the minute the Mori arrived.

And what was more important compared to this, no, compared to anything was,

"No, before Hanbei recovers, Simon does not want to eat anything."

"Please, you need only to focus on surviving now."

"It's exactly as Yakurō says, Kanbei-sama"

Originally, the only one who brought food for Kanbei was the girl with the good upbringing.

This time, accompanying her is a blond haired girl with blue irises.

"You have my gratitude, but it's about time you should tell me already, who exactly are you?"

"This young princess is Ukita Naoie-sama's only daughter, Hideie-sama"

"Yes, I am Hideie"

"I see. Then the ‘Otou-sama’ you speak of refering to..."

"Please forgive Otou-sama for everything he has done. "

The girl who called herself Hideie whimpered while drawing a cross on her chest.

"And I am a merchant's daughter under the orders from my lord to specifically escort Hideie-sama. My Japanese name is Konishi Yakurō while my Christian name is Augustine."

The blond, blue-eyed girl raised the cross in front of her chest to show Kanbei.

"You are both Christians?"

"Correct"

"The one who persuaded Hideie-sama to convert to Christianity was Yakurō, my father and foster mother who are in Sakai engaging in trade are both devout Christians."

"Speaking of Sakai's Konishi clan, could it be that your father is that Konishi Jyoucin sama?"

"Indeed"

"Sakai, huh... How nostalgic. But why would Konishi-sama's daughter is working under Ukita Naoie in Bizen?"

"It was when I was working at an acquaintance's shop as an apprentice..."

"There's quite some distance between Sakai and Bizen. ”

"I-It's not like I escaped because I got into trouble!"

Looks like Yakurō caused some trouble in Sakai.

"So for some reason you went to Bizen, and at that time caught the eye of Naoie?"

"Yes, my lord has always wanted to be able to groom his only daughter, Hideie-sama into a kind-hearted ruler. That's why he had appointed a devout Christian to be the body guard of Hideie-sama."

Humans really are such complex creatures, Kanbei inadvertently thought.

To Ukita Naoie who from a nobody, used various schemes to become the daimyo of Bizen and Mimasaka's 500k yield, should any man obstruct him, he would use various underhanded means to eradicate him.

And if they are women, they would be treated as tools, discarded once they outlived their usefulness.

To think that a man who use his notoriety in order to survive would hire a devout Christian to take care of his daughter ...

And to groom his own daughter to be a kind-hearted ruler ...

This was really too surprising.

"In order to survive, Otou-sama had done many evil things, but he himself knows that after the end of this chaotic era, despicable people like himself will lose all his place in the world. Therefore, he wants Hideie to be a magnificent daimyo who is loved and respected by the people as well as her retainers."

This whispering Hideie was completely different from her father who was nicknamed 'Infinite Wickedness', she was just a down-to-earth girl.

Although she was still young, yet she seemed to be as pure as a nun.

However, the one who picked Konishi Yakurō to be Hideie's guard was after all the wicked Ukita Naoie.

"I see, Ukita Naoie is also a wise man, but since he has these intentions, why does he not change his way of living?"

"My lord always says 'I'm definitely going to Hell anyway' and turns a blind eye to the teachings of Christianity'."

Yakurō appeared to be slightly annoyed but she quickly shook her head and continued.

"And there's another reason why I'm appreciated, Simon-sama, and that is navigation."

"...Navigation?"

"From Sakai to Hakata, then from Hakata to abroad, I've been aboard ships to various places in the world and seen many different sights since young, and as you can see, I look like a Nanban person, so even if I am abroad in a foreign country, it wouldn't be so obtrusive."

"Sailing huh? Simon too has a dream of boarding a big ship and travelling throughout the world, but..."

The deadline for the sentence is approaching.

At the same time the Mori army arrives at Harima, Kuroda Kanbei would be executed.

Due to the fact that Kanbei was locked in a small and narrow jail and being malnourished for a long time, Kanbei's lower leg muscles had begun to shrink.

Even if somehow she could acquire the key to open the jail door, she could no longer even stand up using her own strength in her current state.

Her dream would be shattered while still remaining a dream.

"God will never abandon Simon, therefore please have faith in Sagara Yoshiharu-sama"

"Indeed, if he really were as outstanding as what Kanbei said he was, he'll definitely come."

"Simu, that man really is good, to the extent where one would think he is too good. Caring about everything with his soft heart. Wanting to do everything right, yet because of that delaying, thus hindering his plans and so regardless how many lives he has, the ending will not change, definitely."

"I had met him once, but he didn't seem very reliable."

"He does look a little strange, but still, he is bighearted. "

"If so, he'll definitely come to save Simon, we'll too act according to the situation."

"That's impossible, Simon's legs can no longer move, much less allow her to walk. Furthermore, if Simon really escapes, you gals will definitely incur Ukita Naoie's wrath."

"Uuuu… Hideie already does not want Otou-sama to sin anymore, his 'Definitely not killing women' characteristic is the only redeeming point left of Otou-sama who bears the nickname of 'Despicable'."

"As fellow Christians following Christianity, we'll definitely find the key to release you, Simon!"

"But just Hideie and Yakurō is a bit..."

"Without external manpower, in other words Sagara Yoshiharu-sama's help, this would be too difficult..."

Sagara Yoshiharu will definitely come, this was what Kanbei believed.

Thus, for that moment, she must do what she can to preserve her strength, and not allow her mind and body to grow any weaker.

But also, right now to Kanbei, what's even, even more important to her than her own life was…

“Is Hanbei still alive? Was Sagara Yoshiharu able to save Hanbei? Even though I'm worried, but right now, the only thing Simon can do is pray.”

Correct, compared to Simon's own life, what she placed more importance on was precisely the comrade she found on the battlefield, the genius strategist, Takenaka Hanbei's life.

Hanbei must have had a plan to save Kanbei's sister, Shojyomaru.

Therefore, this time it was up to Simon to save Hanbei.

“So I definitely have to live. Continue to live, and return to Hanbei's side.”

Kanbei forced down the onigiri that was stuck in her throat.

Her stomach's condition was quite bad, even if she ate some food, not much nutrients would be produced.

However, Kanbei had decided not to shed tears any more.

Even if she wanted to, it would be until the moment where she would finally be reunited with Hanbei, it would be tears of joy.

"Kobayakawa, Kikkawa,are we still unable to have a showdown against Oda Nobuna?"

"In just a few days, our Mori army will be able to reach Harima."

"Right now, the frantically panicking Ukita Naoie is aggressively attacking Harima.

"Well well, so to say, the minute the Mori's main army reaches Harima, the result of the battle would have already been decided. Right?"

Inside the main formation of the Mori army, Ashigaka Yoshiaki, the Ashigaka clan's new shogun, exclaimed while waving a fan with the word 'Banzai' and started dancing.

And the twin beauties by her sides were the famous female generals - The "Mori Twins".

Kobayakawa Takakage,

Kikkawa Motoharu.

This pair of sisters were supposed to assist Mori Terumune, the young head of the Mori family, but in fact , they controlled all power in the Mori Clan.

"Even though we cannot make such an assertion, it is true that the situation is developing in our favour."

The younger sister, Kobayakawa Takakage is a famous general who is constantly on her toes and kept her calm no matter what, with the nickname of "The Wise".

“Chūgoku's okonomiyaki are the best, let's fight with the fake Kyoto’s okonomiyaki house.”

The elder sister, Kikkawa Motoharu, is the Mori Clan's number one when it comes to battles, and is nicknamed " The Valiant General". She is a talented swordswoman who mastered 'Iai', a figure of smooth and controlled movements of drawing ones sword from its scabbard, striking or slashing an enemy, removing bloodstains from the sword, and then sheathing the sword back in the scabbard. All of it is in a matter of seconds.

She constantly wore her headband with 'Greater Mori' written on it in order to differentiate herself from her sister.

It was said that when they both quietly stood side by side, even close friends and retainers could not tell who was who.

"Onee-sama, please control your Aki dialect in front of the Shogun."

"Uuu... sorry Takakage."

However the minute they spoke, one could immediately tell the difference from the two.

After the rightful heir to the title of Shogun, Yoshiaki returned to Japan from the Ming Empire, the dominant Mori Clan in the Chūgoku region, mobilised forces in order to fight with the Oda Clan after receiving Yoshiaki's plea to 'assist her in getting to the capital.'

The young head of the Mori, Terumoto, was left behind to defend Aki.

While the Mori Twins departed from their base of Aki, leading their main army and proceeded through Bingo and Bichuu and finally arrived at Bizen, while protecting Ashikaga Yoshiaki,

For the Mori Clan who lorded over the Chūgoku region, Bizen was their easternmost territory.

Any further east would be Harima where the Mori Clan's Ukita Naoie and the Oda Clan's Sagara Yoshiharu were engaged in fierce fighting. After Harima was conquered, Settsu would also swiftly follow, and after Settsu, all that was left would be Kyoto.

The rapidly expanding Oda Clan who had just finished defeating the Azai-Asakura alliance had its forces scattered on and pinned down at multiple battlefronts.

The intelligent Kobayakawa Takakage had discovered the fact they could only strike now while Oda Nobuna have not stablised yet..

But even though Kikkawa Motoharu did not think so deeply, she was overcome by the sentiment of 'Since I've been asked by Shogun-sama, then what I need to do is to use all my efforts to charge towards the capital!'

There's another reason for Motoharu's motivation, and that was …

"The one who leads the Amago Clan's remnants, Yamanaka Shikanosuke, should have already defected to the Oda side. This time, I definitely must defeat Shikanosuke in a duel!"

The Amago Clan which came from Izumo originally wanted to seize the prize of being the ruler of the Chūgoku region and thus fought against the Mori Clan which controlled it.

Though eventually, the Amago Clan was defeated and scattered, but the old Amago Clan's retainer, the fierce general Yamanaka Shikanosuke, with a heart of loyalty that surpassed normal people, continued to move around stirring up trouble, in order to 'revive the Amago Clan'.

Against the overwheming difference in quantity and quality of the army, supplies and economic wealth of the Mori Clan who had taken over the Chūgoku region, the Yamanaka Shikanosuke who led a small band of guerrillas (even though it sounds impressive, in actual fact they were nothing more than a bunch of dejected soldiers) had no chance of winning.

Even the Amago Clan's original family head had already surrendered to the Mori Clan and was living a comfortable life in seclusion.

However, Yamanaka Shikanosuke's stubbornness also surpassed normal people. Regardless of how many defeats she suffered, after a while she would yell "Grant to me the Seven Misfortunes and Eight Pains!" and challenged the Mori to battle once more.

Even though her knowledge on the art of war was practically zero, yet Yamanaka Shikanosuke was so

strong to the extent with just a spear in her hands, she had caused the Mori Clan a great deal of trouble.

There was also one time where they finally succeeded in capturing her alive after lots of effort. However, while persuading her to serve the Mori Clan, she actually used the pretext of going to the toilet to escape and soon, she had continued her guerrilla attacks.

Yamanaka Shikanosuke was not just a fierce general who only knew how to fight; the fact that she was one of the few Izumo bishoujo was also very well known.

When Shikanosuke was still a prisoner, the soldiers of the Mori Clan were shouting things like "We've suffered a lot because of that bastard!" "I nearly died so many times!" and pushed their way into the jail seeking revenge. But the sight of the imprisoned and sullen Yamanaka Shikanosuke's beautiful figure caused them all to lament: "Ah...What a beautiful girl." "I'm dying from bliss..." and like servants, prostrated themselves before her and from then on delivered large quantities of Hiroshima's delicacies to her everyday.

But to think this kind of princess knight would use the excuse of going to the toilet in order to escape!

On a certain day, the imprisoned Shikanosuke requested to her guards.

"Th...This is too embarrassing, but because I ate too much of Hiroshima's Okonomiyaki, I have a terrible stomach-ache now. I...I can't endure any longer. Pl-please let me go to the toilet. Hah... Hah...."

At the sight of Shikanosuke who was wearing a sweat-stained garment, pleading in a low voice while trembling slightly, the guards felt excited, no, concerned and had immediately escorted her to the toilet. But no matter how many times Shikanosuke went, she continued to hug her stomach while her face contorting in spasms of pain, and with sweat pouring off her body.

The guards, after looking at the princess knight who was beautiful as a flower contorting her red blushing face and slender body due to the pain, and her hard to conceal expression of shame and agony, become more and more excited, no, was unabled to carry on watching. They exclaimed ‘This is too pitiful’ and went to get some medicine for her. Making full use of this opportunity, Shikanosuke crawled through the toilet passage in order to flee outside the city.

Motoharu flew into a rage after hearing that Shikanosuke escaped.

A maiden actually crawled through the toilet passage in order to escape?!

“Does she still want to marry someone?!”

“Does she really enjoy suffering through deeds that other people can't even tolerate thinking of?!”

“Or is she trying to say that she would rather suffer this kind of humiliation rather than submit to the Mori Clan?!”

“Could she possibly be trying to say that the Mori Clan is no better than toilets?”

“No, it should be like comparing the Clan to be no better than faeces!”

The enraged Motoharu yelled "Never again will I show mercy to her!" and since then had viewed Shikanosuke as her lifelong sworn enemy and was determined to hunt her down even if it took her a lifetime.

"Shogun-sama, we will be commencing the battle in a while, I will definitely personally lead the troops against Yamanaka Shikanosuke!"

"Oh ho, even though I don't quite understand, but you're quite pumped up Kikkawa"

"Only bastards who treated the Mori Clan as no better than faeces can I never forgive."

The Takakage who was standing at the side coughed lightly.

"Cough cough, Onee-sama, please control your behaviour for wanting to seek duels on the battlefield."

"Why should I, Takakage!"

"This is not a question of 'why', Onee-sama. You are the pillar supporting the Mori Clan, the founder of the Mori Clan, in other words, our father, Motonari, has already passed away, and the Mori Clan's Second Generation, our Onii-sama, died young while the current Third Generation is still young and immature, if at this time we were to lose even you, the Mori clan would really be destroyed."

Even though the Mori Clan was a family with a long history, but in actual fact, the only daimyo was only the Mori Twin's father, Mori Motonari's generation.

So internally, among the members of the Mori Clan, Mori Motonari was called the 'First Generation'

The first generation had a son and two daughters,

His son, Mori Takamoto, became the Mori Clan second generation after Motonari's passing.

Compared to his father Motonari who was nicknamed "Genius Tactician", Takamoto who was a very kind and sincere person was completely different.

Furthermore, he was a bishōnen.

The one who had perfectly integrated the constantly expanding Mori Clan's territories due to the constant warring of his father and sisters was the second generation Takamoto.

While Motonari's two daughters, in other words Kikkawa Motoharu as well as Kobayakawa Takakage, were sent to the relatives in the Mori Clan when they were young as sisters'. They returned later to the Mori

Clan and became the Clan's pillars under Takamoto's arrangements.

The cunning Motonari as well as the ones who inherited Motonari's intelligence and strength, the 'Mori Twins' constantly expanded the Mori Clan's territory, and the second generation head, Takamoto, who treated people generously and ruled over the citizens of the new lands benevolently.

This, is the secret to Mori Clan's great strength.

".....Onii-sama was poisoned by someone. The most respected person in Mori Clan was Onii-sama, to think that someone as honest and pure as him would have people wanting to harm him, I find it hard to believe even now."

Even Motoharu who is always strong lowered her head sadly at this moment.

Yoshiaki silently patted Motoharu's shoulder.

"Onee-sama, it was because Onii-sama was too kind and never suspicious of others that he got tricked."

"Who could have guessed that that evil old man would dare poison Onii-sama, and with a 'I won't harm any humans or animals' look."

"Otou-sama changed completely after Onii-sama's passing..."

"'Even if this was karma, why Takamoto but not me!?' Otou-sama grieved so much that he seemed to age decades overnight, and then took 'Do not covet the world ' as a mantra, putting down his ambition of conquering the world and choosing to live quietly for the rest of his life."

"Otou-sama entrusted Onii-sama's child, the Third Generation Terumoto to us siblings. The Third Generation is still young, the path in this chaotic age in front of the young head of the family is very grim, so the least we can do is let Onii-sama's son live on."

"This is my personal opinion." Takakage said as she began to explain to Motoharu.

"Otou-sama is a legendary talent who will obtain the world if he expand his territory a little more, he will never lose his edge with just age as a reason."

"Why do you think so?"

"In the past, in order to acquire the immense advantage of overseas trade, Otou-sama fought against Otomo Sourin in order to attain supremacy over North Kyushu."

"Oh, speaking of North Kyushu, that's really an intimidating and hellish country."

Even the martial Motoharu said " intimidating and hellish country", North Kyushu's might can be clearly seen.

"The minute we leave Chūgoku. Yamanaka Shikanosuke will immediately appear and cause trouble, forcing us to give up and withdraw from Kyushu to reinforce Chūgoku. Aaaa, if only Shikanosuke didn’t exist...!"

"Otou-sama at North Kyushu was also shocked at Otomo Sorin's inborn talent. The latter had accumulated a great number of cannons while trading with the Nanban, even developing an extremely scary weapon, the 'Ozutsu', while protecting the missionaries who were building monasteries everywhere. When we were in battle, even the Nanban ships joined his forces and began

firing on us. His territory seems to have already transformed into a foreign country. "

The shocked Yoshiaki interupted and asked, "Then why did North Kyushu become the way it is now?"

The Motoharu who devoted all of herself to her sword firmly believed that there's nothing to fear about Namban.

"North Kyushu is a hellish country, Otomo Sorin indulged in the Nanban culture, having no regards for Gods and Buddha and instead only worshipping the foreign God.That's why the retainers of Otomo spilt up."

It might be just as Motoharu said, but what the intelligent Takakage thought of was much deeper.

"Onee-sama, I think the reason Otou-sama parted us with 'Mori Clan does not covet the world' as his final teaching was because he was afraid we would fight among one another and cause Japan to completely become Nanban territory one day."

"Wuu, th-this is too difficult to understand Takakage."

"The chaotic era has already lasted for a hundred years and this country's technological improvements have also halted for a hundred years. However during this period of time, the Nanban countries have constantly improved, their ships had even managed to sail to us here."

"Wuu, explain it a little clearer."

"The Nanban are very strong, and their strength lies not just in their ships, but their weapons and technology. Their missionaries have great mental strength that far surpass that of ordinary people too. Through his dealings with the various Nanban countries, Otou-sama understood the simple fact that if this country does not unify as soon as possible, there will come a day eventually where we will be utterly annexed by the Nanban. In order to prevent this, the Mori Clan must thus abandon its desires and make an effort to contribute back to Japan, I think this was what Otou-sama was trying to say."

"Is it that popular 'conquering the world' idea?"

"It's not just that, even though there are numerous warlords competing with each other for the world, the Mori Clan can still determine who can truly be the hero

of the ages, this kind of power is something we still have. "

"And if no one is capable of that?"

"Once then, even if the Mori Clan becomes the ruler of the world, Otou-sama's spirit in heaven will not rebuke us."

Currently, the person closest to being the ruler of the world would be the capital's Oda Nobuna.

Takakage explained to her Onee-sama and Ashigaka Yoshikage, "Whether Oda Nobuna is the hero who will end this chaotic age, or the demon of the sixth realm that will destroy this country, we shall witness it for ourselves in the coming battle."

"Takakage, is there a need to question the fact about that fellow being a demon lord? She is the mastermind behind the burning of Mt. Hiei and Kamigyo, and most importantly, she took under her wing two of the 'Three Great Evils' of the world: Saito Dousan as well as Matsunaga Hisahide as her companions."

Yoshiaki also echoed loudly, "That's right, that's right, it is that Matsunaga Hisahide who drive the Ashikaga

Shogunate out from Kyoto, this Oda Nobuna who befriended her is also a traitor! Maa, I've already written a letter to Matsunaga Hisahide though, if she is willing to become our companion then I'll write off all her past offences, to be willing to write such a generous letter, my tolerance level is not ordinary eh!"

"As expected of Shogun-sama, Matsunaga Hisahide is a frequent rebel, she may really become our ally."

"Onee-sama, hasn't our Mori Clan already taken in one of the 'Three Great Evils', that Ukita Naoie as a companion, I don't think we have the right to talk about others."

"When I wanted to behead him, it was you who stopped me from doing so."

"The Mori Clan puts righteousness first and will never kill surrendered generals, of course the Yamanaka Shikanosuke who pretended to surrender but escaped in the end is an exception."

"The Oda Clan isn't the same, the whole being of Oda Nobuna exudes an evil aura."

"Onee-sama, the Mori Clan's first generation, our Otou-sama was not really kind too. If anything, the strategies he employed in order to attain victory were also evil. Anyone who covets the world should already had the awareness that they will be labelled as evil, no one can obtain the world without dirtying their hands."

Takakage thought extremely far ahead, not only for the future of the Mori Clan, but the future of Japan.

She inherited Motonari's wisdom as well far-sightedness.

To put it simply, the Motoharu who inherited Motonari's courage could never surpass her own sister.

The siblings understood each other completely, and supported each other's shortcomings.

"Oho, it must be as you said then."

Motoharu candidly believed Takakage, this was one of her strong points.

"The Mori Clan who rose to prominence by relying on betrayals and underhanded tactics, attained a good

reputation was due to a large extent to Onii-sama's goodwill. Otou-sama often said that if Onii-sama were not around he was afraid he would have been known as wicked by the people of the world."

"Onee-sama, exercising schemes to attack and conquer territory, having the courage to shatter old customs and traditions, as well as the capability to govern over these countries for a so called hero, these three qualities are all essential and none of them can be omitted. Only having enough wit, courage as well as good values can one truly commensurate with the world. Saito Dousan, Matsunaga Hisahide as well as Ukita Naoie could be termed as heroes by all, but because they all lacked values they were therefore unable to attain the world."

"All three of them lacked trustworthy and competent subordinates?"

"Perhaps it is so, they started from scratch and had already used their maximum effort in order to become the master of a country and city, not having the spare energy to set up their own family and make displays of their benevolence to wipe off their notoriety, especially that Ukita Naoie, his position is especially gloomy.

Ukita Naoie was the child of a family of warriors who lost their land and fell out of grace.

Compared to the merchants or common citizens who were originally born with nothing to their name, the path set in front of a child from a disgraced warrior family who had to retrieve what it had originally lost was much more arduous, Takakage said.

Ukita Naoie, who had even used his wife as a tool to climb up the social ranks is always alone. Even though he finally had a daughter when he was middle aged, but she was still young.

"Onee-sama, in actual fact, our Otou-sama's cirumstances were extremely similar with Ukita Naoie, like Ukita Naoie, Otou-sama's parents passed away early, and due to his retainers betraying him, he had lost all his land, endured untold hardships before he managed to climb up from the bottomless abyss and revive the Mori Clan's name and become a Daimyo."

"Oho~"

"The only difference was that Otou-sama had a blessed family, the birth of Onii-sama as well as we siblings eased Otou-sama's belligerence, or else i'm afraid

Otou-sama would be shouldering a bad name no worse than Ukita Naoie's."

"Oho~, in this chaotic Sengoku era where fathers are forced to fight and kill their sons, we siblings are so blessed to be born into the Mori Clan, ho ho."

"It is indeed so, Onee-sama ho ho ho."

Yoshiaki also raised her hand and said "I have good relations with my Ani-ue as well"

Even if one took the 'Three Great Evils' as an extreme isolated example,

Takeda Shingen,

Uesugi Kenshin,

Otomo Sorin,

Even if one were to be born among the family of a daimyo, but in order to take control of the Clan, numerous heroes were being forced to turn against their parents or relatives were numerous in this chaotic war era.

The interior of Oda Nobuna's clan was not harmonious as well.

Nobuna's biological father as well as foster father Dousan had both already passed on, her biological brother vied with her for the position as head of the family, and now she was on bad terms with her biological mother.

"Takakage, how can a person who can't unite her own clan end this chaotic era and bring peace to the masses? Someone shouldering the burden of the destiny, and at the same time wielding enormous power will eventually be unable to resist their heart's temptations and become a demon that brings disaster to both citizens and country."

"It might be just as you said Onee-sama, remember the time when Otou-sama, with a serious face tried to teach us three siblings about the principle of 'Three Arrows are hard to break', you had broke the three arrows with a snap? That speechless expression of Otou-sama then..."

"Cough cough, Takakage, didn't we agree to treat that incident like it never happened?"

"Did we?"

"Takakage, taking your point about a harmonious clan, as expected, only the Mori Clan is capable of being the rulers of the world."

"Hmm?"

"I'm not too sure about the situation on the Eastern side, but among the Western daimyos, the only family with the reputation of a harmonious clan is the Shimazu, but the distance between the Shimazu and the capital is too far."

"The Oda Clan can be said to be filled with talent now, amongst them, there might be people comparable to Onii-sama in terms of virtue."

"Someone who is comparable with Onii-sama in terms of virtue? Even if we're just talking about it it's something very hard to imagine, someone as superb as Onii-sama is impossible to find now Takakage!"

"It need not necessarily be a man, it could even be a princess knight, it matters not whether it's a male or female."

"Anyway, as long as it's not a man as great as Onii-sama, I will never get married, but someone of that calibre is really too hard to find."

"....Same here Onee-sama, because Onii-sama was too excellent, I find myself unable to love anyone else, no matter whom I encounter I inadvertently compare him to Onii-sama and in the end only increase my disappointment."

"Ne~ Takakage, the intelligent you should be able to answer me, if this goes on would we really remain single for the rest of our lives?"

"... ... ..."

"D-don't remain silent!"

The siblings fell silent at the mention of this painful question, but Takakage was the first to buck up.

"Cough cough, in summary, we just need to test the true strength of the Oda Clan in the coming battle, the Ukita Naoie who is infinitely wicked is the best possible

person for the job, would Oda Nobuna who had been forced into a corner reveal her true face as a demon king and cause her retainers to split or..."

"Would she awaken to become a true hero, at the same time, hidden among her retainers, someone with virtue would also be exposed."

"This gamble which involves everything of the Oda Clan would certainly test whether she can commensurate with the world."

"Haa, Takakage, you really think too deeply and far-sighted, for the muscle-brained me, this is a bit..."

"Ha ha, life is but a dream eh"

Takakage smiled,

Motoharu was unable to understand the meaning of this sentence.

Even though no one knows if Takakage, who tried her very best to act for the Mori Clan and Japan's future, had a 'sense of self' within her, but Motoharu could

understand Takakage, who possessed a determination whom no one could ever imagine to repress her 'sense of self' and not reveal it, more than herself.

"What you have said is a bit difficult for me; in short, the Oda Nobuna who argues within her family can't do it . The only one who can commensurate with the world, is Ashigaka Yoshiaki who has good relations with her brother, which is obviously yours truly! ho ho ho"

It would appear that it's too early for the young and immature Ashigaka Yoshiaki to understand the meaning of those words.

There are only a few days left before the arrival of Mori Clan's army.

Currently the Sagara Yoshiharu as well as the Ukita Naoie, currently on Harima's land, are continuing their offensive-defensive battles

Sagara Yoshiharu who was appointed as the great general fighting against the Mori Clan used the Himeji

Castle in Harima's centre as a stronghold surrounded the Miki Castle that Ukita Naoie sparked the betrayal of.

Ukita Naoie occupied the north-west of Himeji Castle, the natural fortress Mt Shozan, and used it as its stronghold, and imprisoned Yoshiharu's strategist Kuroda Kanbei in the underground jail of the mountain.

Ukita Naoie, the Mori Clan's vanguard for the assault on Harima received two orders from the Mori Twins.

The first one was to secure and defend a stronghold in Harima to prepare for the Mori main army's arrival.

This mission was already accomplished when Mt Shozan was captured.

However, it was a pity that the Miki castle, which occupied a strategic location in east Harima to cut off the Sagara Corps's retreat path, was already encircled by Yoshiharu on a scale that shocked people, nobody thought that the Sagara Corps could use such a small amount of soldiers to accomplish such a task.

While the other task was a difficult one; it was to capture Yamanaka Shikanosuke, the old enemy which gave even the Mori Clan headaches alive.

This mission was not completed by Naoie even up till now.

Yamanake Shikanosuke as predicted joined the Sagara Corps and became a strong force.

If Ukita Naoie was unable to capture Yamanaka Shikanosuke alive before the Mori Clan's main army arrived, then his lands would be confiscated by the Mori Twins.

To the current Ukita Naoie who had used many schemes to get to where he was now, the Mori Clan was originally his enemy.

But the Ukita Naoie who had conquered Bizen and Mimasaka, geographically was sandwiched in between the Oda Clan which was increasing in power and the Mori Clan and in order to survive could only pick the option of joining the Mori Clan known for it's righteousness.

However, the words and deeds of Ukita Naoie up until that point had given him the notoriety of having no credibility, seeming to many people as the representative of those who have no credibility or loyalty.

So even if he could not accomplish his mission and really had his land taken from him by the Mori Twins, he also could not complain, in reality, asking him to commit seppuku to apologize would not be surprising.

The Ukita Naoie who understood this point better than anyone else could be said to be desperate.

So he declared thus to Sagara Yoshiharu

"If you do not hand over Yamanaka Shikanosuke before the Mori Clan's army arrives, I will execute Kuroda Kanbei."

If Yoshiharu did not make a decision soon, he would lose his irreplaceable companion Kanbei.

But at this critical point Yoshiharu's other strategist, Takenaka Hanbei had also fell ill and fainted, and was in a critical condition where she might die anytime.

According to Zenki, if one wanted to extend Takenaka Hanbei's life, the Ranjatai in the Shousouin of Todai Shrine was indispensable.

The Ranjatai was the secret treasure of the Imperial Palace.

Without the permission from both the Imperial Palace and Nobuna, it would never be given to Yoshiharu.

But Nobuna who is in Kyoto was unable to leave Honnou-ji due to breathing in the misama from the Kyoto Fire.

Even if Yoshiharu personally went there, he would be obstructed by her new aide and prevented from meeting her.

Yoshiharu had also tried sneaking into the Imperial palace but was caught by the Kampaku Konoe Sakihisa, and given a vicious beating, leaving him full of injuries.

If this continued, Hanbei’s and Kanbei's lives would both be in danger.

Nobuna seems to be very strange recently too.

The companions during the Owari, Mino times were all scattered.

The time taken in order to seek their help would be too great.

Precisely during the time where Yoshiharu headed towards the capital, Yamanaka Shikanosuke, in order to save Kanbei, headed to Mt Shozan alone.

The greatest crisis of Yoshiharu's life was just placed before his eyes.

Compared to himself, dying on the battlefield, the suffering of being unable to save his comrades was much more difficult to endure.

This was not just talk,

Dying on the battlefield warranted only a moment of pain,

But the regret of being unable to save one's own comrades would last a lifetime, not vanishing till death.

Yoshiharu clearly understood this point.

If Kanbei who had devoted her own life to Nobuna and Yoshiharu's dream can survive, he had something he wish to tell her.

And that was --

"Wait Shikanosuke!"

He finally caught up!

Yoshiharu who had desperately chased after Shikanosuke finally caught up to her at a path towards Mt Shozan, right by Yumesakigara riverside.

Above their heads, a star that exudes unholy radiance -- the star of disaster slowly revealed itself.

Shikanosuke did not wear her armour, even her iconic crescent moon helmet was not with her.

She had already resolved herself for death.

"Yoshiharu-sama? Why did you come!?"

Shikanosuke glared at Yoshiharu, as if saying

I've already made my decision.

Please don't come and throw my feelings in disarray!

But Yoshiharu did not back down, he stuck out his chest and yelled

"Obviously it's to bring you back!"

"What are you saying? If you bring me back, Kanbei would be executed!"

"Ukita Naoie is not the kind of person who obediently follows what he promised, even if you go, he would not return Kanbei! Furthermore..."

"Furthermore?"

Just as Shikanosuke was about to cross the Yumesakigara River, Yoshiharu jumped off his horse and looked straight at Shikanosuke while walking towards her.

"I will never leave a comrade in the lurch! I will not be confused over the question of who should I save anymore! In order to be capable of holding everything in my hands I have already decided to turn myself into a bag capable of accommodating everything!"

"I... am not your companion"

Shikanosuke also jumped down her horse.

But this was not to receive Yoshiharu.

Her whole body radiated intense killing intent.

"I had always fought because of my own wish to revive the Amago Clan, the reason why I joined the Oda Clan was only to make use of the Oda Clan's military strength, and never having any intention to swear fealty to you, a nobody like you should stop being so full of yourself."

Even if Shikanosuke was not armed, she was still extremely strong.

However, Yoshiharu did not stop walking.

Shikanosuke used various unfamiliar vicious language to put down Yoshiharu, praying in her heart that he would just give up.

But still, Yoshiharu extended his hand towards her with all his strength.

Shikanosuke wanted to hit that hand away, but her lips started trembling because of her sorrow.

It was as if she was unable to endure the use of her abusive words against Yoshiharu.

(How bad can she be at lying)

Yoshiharu thought as he yelled at Shikanosuke,

"YOU LIAR! Then why would you want to sacrifice yourself in order to save Kanbei!"

"That's because I've already given up on restoring the Amago Clan, I didn't expect that the Oda Clan had weakened to this degree, I had despaired and want to seek death!"

"LIAR! SOMEONE WHO HAD GIVEN UP HOPE WOULD NEVER HAVE THOSE KIND OF EYES! I WILL DEFINITELY BRING YOU BACK!"

"It's easy to say that, do you think you can defeat me?!"

"I CAN!"

"YOU CAN'T!"

Yoshiharu bent his body, extending his arm to hug Shikanosuke's waist.

However, he could not catch her.

Before he managed to grab her, he suffered a heavy knee-strike to his abdomen.

That sudden impact almost made him vomit out everything in his stomach.

Yoshiharu was literally sent flying into the Yumesakigara River.

The river water was extremely cold, as cold as ice.

Yoshiharu pulled himself onto shore.

"Why didn’t you dodge it, isn't dodging your speciality?"

"I will not dodge."

Yoshiharu dragged his body which is already on the verge of total collapse and resolutely stood in front of Shikanosuke again.

"You obviously don't have any other talents besides evasion!"

How true, Yoshiharu smiled bitterly to himself in his heart,

"Yeah, I am weak, originally I wasn't even fit to be a warrior, if I did not have this evasion ability which was dubbed 'Ball-dodging Yoshi' I would have died countless times already."

"That's why....."

"But Yamanaka Shikanosuke, I will definitely not dodge your attacks."

"Enough! Please don't care about me any longer...!"

"Because of the commander's, my own weakness, Hanbei, Kanbei as well as yourself, don't have any choice but to shoulder all the burdens, becoming like this now! But from today on, it won't be like this anymore! I will become stronger! I will show you that I can become a true commander of the Sagara Corps!"

"If you take another two or three hits of mine directly, you will really die!"

"Even so I will never give up!"

"Why! Why must you do things to this extent?!"

"YOU NEED A REASON TO SAVE A COMRADE IN DANGER?!"

Yoshiharu clenched his teeth shut, and used all of his strength to once again rush towards Shikanosuke.

Grabbing her waist is impossible,

Then I'll aim for her legs,

But this time what struck Yoshiharu was an elbow.

His back suffered a heavy blow from Shikanosuke's elbow.

By the time he reacted he was already knocked into the mud,

Sand and mud filled his mouth,

Above him was the sound of Shikanosuke's tearful, stuttering voice.

"You.... should have.... avoided that elbow."

However Yoshiharu did not have any intention to dodge,

He had already resolved himself to endure whatever Shikanosuke dished out at him.

Since he was still breathing,

He had to stand up again.

Even if his vision is blurred, and his knees trembling, he had to stand.

"PLEASE DON'T STAND UP AGAIN!"

Yoshiharu understood.

The reason why Hanbei was so weak but yet was unwilling to rest even till the last minute.

Yoshiharu now finally understood it.

When your companions are stumbling in pain in front of your eyes at the crossroads of destiny.

How could one say 'Enough already, I have already tried my best so the outcome doesn't matter.' words that mean giving up midway.

".....Kanbei was the one who dreams of holding the title of the most intelligent person in the world, boarding a ship to travel the world to learn, that's why she came to the side of Nobuna, the one who has the dream of 'Tenka Fubu'"

"....What?"

"So I was unable to look at the dreams which Kanbei and Nobuna embraced differently."

"What exactly are you talking about....!?"

"They have the same dream so even if their final destination is different, they are still walking on the same path, that's why they are friends."

"It has nothing to do with me! Izumo's Amago Clan is completely inconsequential to you! I am simply a girl from the countryside which has been discarded by the era!"

"From the time I came to this world I always wanted to rely on my own power to save Nobuna, but that's wrong, just relying on my own strength is definitely insufficient, what's more important are partners who can inherit my will, because I was too fool to notice it, this much time has already elapsed, but I can still make it in time!"

Once again,

Yoshiharu got into the stance of grabbing Shikanosuke's waist in front of her

However, he understood that he could not match the speed he once had at the beginning.

His knees were constantly trembling,

If he suffered another hit from the knee, his chin would definitely be shattered.

"P-please don't force me any longer"

This is the first time Yoshiharu seen Shikanosuke crying her eyes out.

"I am simply a girl from the countryside who doesn't know anything besides Izumo, other than being loyal to

the Amago Clan I don't know and can't do anything, if even you were to die here for someone like me then what should I do?!"

"To talk about yourself like that when being so strong, what a bad habit."

Yoshiharu rushed forward,

"In my world, whether its wars or generals, all of them are done by men, even though there are female solders, but basically it's done by men, however-"

"Enough, please give up...! Let it end here!"

"However, Yamanaka Shikanosuke was really magnificent, Nobuna, Kanbei. Hanbei too..."

Shikanosuke rapidly struck out with her leg,

This leg was aimed at the middle of Yoshiharu's face,

Oh damn, it's not a knee strike,

“No matter how painful it is, even if my body breaks, I definitely won't give up.”

So she intends to use a concussion to knock me unconscious.

".....Not yet.....!"

Yoshiharu jerked his leg out

And he managed to restabilise his upper body in the instant before he fell down.

Large amounts of blood immediately gushed out from the depths of his nose.

“Uwawa ... this is bad, even though I subconsciously panicked a bit but still it's become like this, it doesn't matter anymore.”

"Why, just why would you go to this extent for me...?"

"Don't ask what you already know, haven't I at least been saved twice by you Shikanosuke, that time at Kozuki Castle and now here at Yumesakigara.... Eh?"

“Eh, when I talk huge amounts of blood from my nose pour into my mouth.”

There's no way to speak properly like this, cough... cough, looks like if I don't tilt my head upwards, there's no way I can continue.”

Yoshiharu who noticed this point hurriedly made some gestures in front of his chest.

"...Sorry, even though my gestures aren't very clear but I really have been saved by you many times, no matter how many times I repay you it's not enough."

"I only did it for the Amago Clan! Not for you! Anyway, the retainers of a daimyo family which has been destroyed are simply discarded chess pieces! As long as I haven't given up on my loyalty towards the Amago Clan, I am simply a mercenary to be thrown away! Companions or something...!"

Yamanaka Shikanosuke was the child of a retainer of the Amago Clan, until the instant when the Amago Clan was destroyed, she was always fighting the Mori Clan.

Even when the Amago Clan was destroyed, Shikanosuke did not serve other daimyos, but continued to fight against the Mori Clan in order to 'revive the Amago Clan'

However, Shikanosuke who has led the remnants of the Amago Clan cannot even remember how many times she has been betrayed.

Even if they were allies or companions who swore to fight together, they eventually defected to the Mori Clan, sometimes even at critical junctures where they were one step away from restoring the Amago Clan.

The initial battles for revival were also like that, the alliance against the Mori Clan fell apart at the last moment and caused Shikanosuke to taste defeat.

Mori Motonari was a genius who was proficient in the art of war and was called the 'Sengoku era's number one intelligent general'.

But the stupidly honest Shikanosuke only knew how to 'trust her companions'

When she was young, the Amago Clan which she was formerly from had mistrust within itself due to Mori Motonari's scheme; half of the reason for their eventual destruction was because of fratricide.

Shikanosuke who had found that disgusting, swore to herself in her heart 'I definitely will not betray others, suspect others or lie to others'

However Shikanosuke who retreated back to Izumo to engage the Mori Clan in combat once again suffered the old Amago Clan's citizen's betrayal.

They leaked to the Mori Army the secret passages leading towards Shikanosuke's stronghold and caused her to lose badly once again.

Even the citizens of Izumo already defected to the Mori Clan, the civilians who wished for the revival of the Amago Clan were almost non-existent.

Yet Shikanosuke who understood this in her heart was still unwilling to give up her ambition,

She did not have any personal grudge against the Mori Clan,

However the only thing she wanted to prevent at any cost was the fact that the Amago Clan that she served would be so easily forgotten by the people.

Is it bad for someone like me who can't keep up with these chaotic times where power is everything to exist?

Power decides everything, if the idea that betrayals and revolts were common occurrences was not changed in people's hearts, this chaotic era would not end.

So even if the Mori Motonari who destroyed the Amago Clan died due to an illness, Shikanosuke did not give up on fighting.

“However, since when did it start happening?”

The comrades who chased the same dream left her one by one.

Maybe it was when she shifted the front line to the Inaba east of Izumo that it happened.

Inaba's daimyo, Yamana Toyokuni was expelled from his home city due to a rebellion from his own retainers and encountered the wandering Yamanaka Shikanosuke, Shikanosuke said 'If you are willing to help me restore the Amago Clan, I and the Amago heroes will help you retake Inaba' and then really went to help Yamana Toyokuni wrest back control of his territory.

"You really fought for me, take Inaba as your territory. "

Yamana Toyokuni was a frail youth, even though he was proficient in his knowledge and his elegance but he did not excel in combat.

Even though Shikanosuke simply handed Inaba back to him, but he did not think that he could repay his debt in such a way.

So he begged Shikanosuke to become a Clan elder of the Yamana Clan.

However Shikanosuke did not accept it,

"I only wish to revive my former Clan in Izumo."

"I cannot treat my benefactor like this, accept at least in name"

"In that case I'll accept your good intentions in name only, before I retake Izumo I'll lend my strength to Yamana-sama"

Yamana Toyokuni cried while thanking Shikanosuke for her kindness, and gave her the citadel's mansion while he moved to the outer city.

However, this Yamana Toyokuni had also abandoned the agreement to help Shikanosuke retake Izumo in the end, using the time of Shinakosuke's departure from Inaba, he defected to the Mori Clan.

Shikanosuke had to steel her heart and lead the Amago heroes to attack their previous ally Yamana Toyokuni.

However this was not out of hate for Yamana Toyokuni,

Inaba was in the immediate neighbourhood of Izumo and was the only way to access it.

Shikanosuke's military rations were also stored in Inaba,

If Inaba was not recaptured, the Amago heroes would lose their path of retreat and become an isolated army and be completely destroyed in Izumo.

Therefore, it was a must to attack.

As the current opponent was not the Mori clan that was proficient in strategy Shikanosuke won a victory.

However she had no plans of killing Yamana Toyokuni from the beginning,

Shikanosuke did not bear hatred towards him,

No matter who it was, everyone would seek refuge with the Mori Clan for their own personal gains and interest.

Maybe this is what's known as 'Human Nature'

Even the foolish and straightforward Yamanaka Shikanosuke understood this now.

Therefore it was a must to make her own dream become purer.

The Shikanosuke who encountered the Yamana Toyokuni who was prostrated on the ground helped him to his feet and pleaded to him again,

And once spoke of her own dream.

"Yamana-sama, I will return Inaba to you so please assist me in reviving the Amago Clan, I don't need your army, all I need is for you to loan me military rations and grant me passage."

"Shikanosuke-sama, do you not intend to kill me?"

"My enemy is only the Mori Clan who destroyed the Amago Clan."

"Why, just why are you so free of desires?"

"It's not that I have no desires, but that it has already been filled by my dream."

"I don't understand, if you killed me, Inaba would be yours, in order to retake Izumo, isn't Inaba indispensable ?"

"If I really use such unjust means to retake Izumo, then in the future, there will be nobody who will be willing to follow the Amago Clan. Battling on requires a dream to fight for, if this point is lacking, then it's just mindless slaughtering."

However Yamana Toyokuni was unable to understand Shikanosuke's dream,

"Shikanosuke-sama, please listen to this ordinary person's words, people who can understand your dream in this chaotic era do not exist, your heart is too beautiful, if this goes on, you will have no way to continue surviving."

"It's not that I'm beautiful, but rather this country is too chaotic, therefore someone like me who fights for his dream is extremely important to this country."

"Shikanosuke-sama, a dream is just a dream, your courage and ferocity has already resounded throughout the western provinces, why don't you serve other daimyo?"

"I had devoted my loyalty to the Amago Clan, loyal retainers don't serve two lords."

"Even if it's not your true intention it is fine, all you need to do is pretend on the surface, nobody can see through another person's heart Shikanosuke-sama."

"I cannot do that."

"As long as you remember your old master in your heart it's not considered a betrayal, furthermore, the fact

that you're not the kind of person to betray others is well known."

"It's not like that, I had once surrendered to the Mori Clan but escaped after betraying them, and it's something I had planned on doing before faking my surrender."

"This is not considered betrayal, but military tactics, why are you so strict on yourself?"

"There have already been countless matyrs who have given up their lives for my dream, I cannot sully it."

Yamana Toyokuni was so touched that he cried, and vowed "This time even if I must bet my life I will help Shikanosuke-sama"

Shikanosuke believed that those tears were sincere and returned Inaba to Yamana Toyokuni.

Then in order to complete the revival of the Amago Clan returned to the battlefield to fight against the Mori Clan.

All of this was to retake Izumo,

.....

However,

When Shikanosuke was fighting a bloody battle, Yamana Toyokuni, terrified of Mori Clan's power, once again betrayed her.

Their retreat route was cut off,

Supplies were gradually exhausted,

The shaken army eventually lost to the Mori Clan.

Just a little bit more again, Shikanosuke once again was unable to fulfil her dream due to her companion's betrayal.

"People's hearts are fickle, with no certainty, this is what's known as mortals" The letter which Yamana Toyokuni sent was written thus.

In that instant that Shikanosuke heard of Yamana Toyokuni's betrayal again, a certain something broke in her heart.

'I prayed hard to the moon for the Seven sufferings and Eight pains, but I neither prayed for betrayal by my companions, nor prayed for myself being unable to trust others'

Even if she moaned such in her heart, it would not help her situation.

The troops and supplies needed to attack Inaba again in order to retake Izumo were already gone.

Even the army's daily expenses were unable to continue, and in the end she had no choice but to steal and rob.

Her dream was sullied,

The companions who chased after the same dream as her left her one by one,

Shikanosuke started to not place her trust in others.

She finally realised that she who rigidly adhered to revive the Amago Clan was simply a buffoon.

So, a person like her is now reduced to becoming a mere thief.

No, I can't continuing falling like this,

Shikanosuke who was forced into a desperate situation finally gave up her principle of 'Loyal retainers do not serve two masters' and entered Harima seeking refuge from Sagara Yoshiharu.

After ‘something’ broke in her heart due to Yamana Toyokuni's betrayal, Shikanosuke might had misplaced her aim and methods..

The tragic wish to revive the Amago Clan had at some point become a beautiful voice in her heart, seemingly like a last line of defence, protecting her heart on the verge of collapsing.

Therefore even while serving Sagara Yoshiharu she always had her heart sealed shut.

To the Oda Clan who wanted to unify the world, reviving the Amago Clan was simply a tantrum thrown by a country bumpkin.

Izumo was but an insignificant little place,

“They will not understand my dream, therefore.”

“I will never trust anyone anymore.”

“If I trusted someone and was betrayed again, I'm afraid that I would really give up living as a human.”

Probably becoming a ghost, Shikanosuke instinctively understood this.

Therefore a thing like swearing the oath of loyalty towards Sagara Yoshiharu as well as Oda Nobuna has never happened in her heart.

It should be like so,

Henceforth as well——

She could not bear the taste of betrayal once again,

The only one that could be trusted was the old Amago Clan

For the reason why,

"....The reason is, because the Amago Clan has already been destroyed, it does not exist anymore. So-"

So they definitely won't betray me.

"Stop this bullshit!"

The dejected grieving Shikanosuke suddenly took a slap to her cheeks,

Raising her head, she found Sagara Yoshiharu, who had been standing in front of her with a Nio-like face.

[1]

He was furious,

Furious to the point that his eyes had turned blood red .

"You're not a ghost, Yamanaka Shikanosuke! You're still alive!"

No way to retort,

With her knees suddenly losing strength, Shikanosuke involuntarily covered her face with her own hands.

"I am simply a fool who is satisfied with passing a good reputation onto future generations."

"Lies! If it was really like that then why are you crying! "

Not comprehending exactly why.....

Even when the Amago Clan was destroyed she did not shed tears, yet they are flowing down continuously.

"I heard from Zenki that I could not revive the Amago Clan, and in the end lost to the Mori Clan and was executed, that is my fate."

"A fate like this, I will change it no matter how many times!"

"...If this goes on I will have no 'face' to meet my companions who generously charged to their death for my unfinished dream, therefore at least...at the end, for someone...for someone's dream"

Unable to trust others anymore, it should have be like this.

However after the sight of Hanbei and Kanbei entrusting their dreams to their companions with those kinds of actions, something in her heart started to stir again.

That heart which was supposed to be broken started beating again, Therefore Shikanosuke thought that sacrificing her own life to save Kanbei was the only way to repay that kindness,

"REJECTED! I! WILL NEVER LET YOU USE THE METHOD OF DYING BEFORE YOUR DREAMS ARE FULFILLED IN ORDER TO LEAVE YOUR NAME FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS!"

Being hugged,

Her body was hugged.

Her heart... was also captured.

In the span of a few days this girl underwent a tremendous change.

"Being alive yet wanting to give up your life, such a thing, I don't agree! There're some words I still haven't

told Hanbei yet, but eventually I will tell her! You as well ! Live on!"

"... My dream, no one will...."

"...We're here! We will definitely revive the Amago Clan for you! Sagara Corps will go with Yamanaka Shikanosuke to fulfil her dreams and fight till the end! So live on!"

There was no confusion in his words,

The tears streaming down had absolutely no deception .

Everything was from his heart,

Shikanosuke instinctively understood this.

Similar to herself who in order to save Kanbei was willing to abandon her life without hesitation.

This person too, if it was to save his companions he would be completely fine with abandoning his own life.

Even if he died, as long as the dream was inherited by his companions, then he is alive.

At this moment, the hearts of these two embracing people were joined.

Yeah,

“I have already become a member of the Sagara Corps, Shikanosuke is a companion of the Sagara Corps,”

"I swear to the moon to never betray you! Even till death!"

A kind of feeling surged through Shikanosuke's chest, this kind of feeling was not simply loyalty towards a master,

Instead, it was an even freer, even wider, even more profound ray of light that illuminated Shikanosuke's heart.

"I too, absolutely will not betray my lord, even till death"

After she said that, Shikanosuke tightly clung to Yoshiharu and cried loudly.

To the south of Himeji Castle there was a fishing village.

The village's name in Kanji was 'Utsushize' pronounced as 'Aga'

This fishing village was built in the Yumesakigawa River estuary had an assortment of markets as well and the temple of Nyankousou.

This rural setting was imbued with a vigour and vitality

Maybe instead of a fishing village, calling Aga a port city would be more appropriate.

Today, at a certain part of the fishing village, at a silent shrine Yoshiharu, Shikanosuke as well as Zenki's figures appeared.

"With my master being unable to command the battle, the plan of utilising a feint against Ukita Naoie to delay him and using that opportunity to rescue Kanbei, we can only ask Granny Aga to help."

In a corner right in front of a shrine that was hidden by vegetation, Zenki said.

"Granny Aga?"

"Granny Aga is Harima's extremely famous Onmyouji, rumour has it that she's more than a hundred years old, but in reality nobody knows her real age."

Shikanosuke said, "Are we asking her to replace Hanbei-sama to command the battle?"

"Goemon and the rest have already been sent to Yamato to steal the Ranjatai, now besides Yamanaka Shikanosuke who will command the feint unit as well as Sagara Yoshiharu who will command the Kanbei rescue team, there are no other plans." "I have to be a ninja this time?"

"Being the core warrior for an assault is my forte, but complex commanding is a bit..."

"Therefore we need to ask Granny Aga for help, many Onmyouji(s) had served as military advisors, and Granny Aga is the strongest among them."

Zenki smiled as he said an incantation towards the shrine.

Creak

The shrine doors crashed opened.

"Could that Granny Aga be in this shrine?"

"That's correct, she's a bit of a strange one"

"This shrine is really strange, could that ladder lead deep underground"

"Apparently, Granny Aga lives underground"

"This could not possibly lead to the underworld could it?"

"You want to give up Sagara Yoshiharu?"

"Of course I'll go down!"

"I will also go my lord"

"Shikanosuke-chan, that ‘My Lord’ makes me feel uneasy."

"That's because my lord is my lord. Also, my lord you shouldn’t be calling me with the '-chan' honorific anymore, I'm not a small kid so please call me by name and address me properly."

"Understood"

"Heh heh, when did the relationship between the two of you become so good to start talking with your fists?"

"I'm not a man Zenki, but a Bishoujo in her prime"

With Zenki in the lead, they walked in a line deeper into the underground.

Upon reaching there, a great deal of large glass tubes, globes, various boxes with frogs and mice reared inside, countless books as well as a steaming cauldron were in sight inside the dark room.

The old granny stood in front of the cauldron and stirred the unknown concoction filled inside it.

"Oh my! What special visitors, I never would have thought you'd come to this Harima's rural countryside." She spoke after noticing Zenki's presence.

From sight alone it was impossible to determine her age, One hundred years? Two hundred years? No, maybe longer,

She wore a tattered haori and was focused on stirring whatever it was she was cooking with her spoon.

The Yoshiharu who was looking at her subconsciously thought 'This is no Onmyouji, she's obviously a witch!'

"You look so hale Granny Aga"

It seems like Zenki and this Granny Aga were very intimate,

"Hee hee hee, you turned into a shikigami? My ancestors suffered major losses at the hands of the shikigami you created."

"It's nothing, it's my just desserts, I'm now repaying the debts that I had owed"

"What are they saying my lord?" Shikanosuke whispered into Yoshiharu's ear, but of course Yoshiharu also did not know,

"Hee hee hee, the me who relied on you to do business could not carry on, furthermore, a good portion of my shikigami could not be summoned anymore, so I could only sell some books regarding Harima to make up my loss."

While speaking, Granny Aga used a thin finger and pointed at the large number of books in a corner.

"Hee hee hee, those are all my writings to kill time"

"And the one who has read finished all of these is only my unworthy disciple Kanbei." Granny Aga put heavy emphasis of the phrase 'unworthy'.

"I travelled Harima, and recorded the geographical features, customs, history and unbelievable legends, even though it's not a surprising thing, but it has many uses on a battlefield, therefore those Clans who are intent on maintaining their hegemony are willing to offer high prices to buy them, hee hee hee"

"What I recommend is the book that recorded the supernatural incidents in Harima 'Wandering Testament of Banshu', if you purchase it now I can give you a 30% discount." Granny Aga grinned and added.

Her mouth does not have any teeth anymore,

Wawa, Yoshiharu involuntary gasped, Shikanosuke who was by his side also trembled slightly.

Only Zenki remained unfazed and said,

"Ara~ The age of Onmyoujis and spirits is going to end soon, the strange incidents happening in Harima have also reduced no?"

"Hee hee hee, it underwent a great reduction, Zenki, you guys must have destroyed the dragon veins of the lands eh?"

"He he, That's right"

"All I need to do is continue to use these elixirs of longevity and I can still survive for another one hundred years without any problem, however, you and your master are about to die."

"Hehe, to a shikigami there's no such thing as death, it's just returning to the heavens."

"Your master should be roughly the same age as Kanbei, but her body is much more frail, to leave this world at such a young age is such a pity, hee hee hee"

"It is precisely to not let her die that we've come here."

"Oya, didn't you guys come here for the sake of helping Kanbei. If it's anything concerning that disciple of mine, then forget it. She abandoned the Onmyou Arts, and instead was keen on whatever Nanban Science."

Granny Aga worked her lips into a sneer and continued "I heard that she rushed to persuade Ukita Naoie without discussing with you guys and in the end got captured, furthermore she would be executed in a while, that child was always stubborn and impatient since young, it would seem that this habit can't be corrected even till death."

"Be it Kanbei or my master Hanbei, both of them will be saved, but the deadline is only five days away."

Upon hearing this, Granny Aga could not help but frown,

"I originally thought you weren't such a naive man, but it seems that even my eyes deceive me."

"The person who said this was not me but Sagara Yoshiharu-sama"

Granny Aga,

Sagara Yoshiharu

The two of them formally exchanged names,

"I am Sagara Yoshiharu, a general of the Oda Clan, the commander of the army against the Mori, as you know, my military strategist Kanbei is about to be executed by Ukita Naoie, please lend me your assistance, Oba-san, we're almost out of time!!"

"Call me Granny Aga, what was my former name? Oh right right, Ashiya Doukai, Harima's great Onmyouji Ashiya Doman's descendant, I think it was the sixtieth generation?"

"Sixtieth generation? You're past your prime already Oba-san"

"When you're old you have a bad memory, tee hee hee, my ancestor Ashiya Doman-sama fought against a certain clever Onmyouji playful as a fox."

"Anyway, please, lend me your strength."

"Ara ara, what should I do tee hee hee"

"The incident involving Hanbei has already been entrusted to Goemon to handle, we want to save Kanbei out from Mt Shozan!"

"Oh, if it's Mt Shozan I have very detailed knowledge of it, I even have a map"

"Oh, you're a great help!"

"As long as it's related to Harima, I know everything, however in exchange the price for this knowledge is very high, tee hee hee"

Zenki explained the plan to Granny Aga,

Shikanosuke-chan replaces the Hanbei who is currently in a coma to lead the feint unit and lure Ukita Naoie out of Mt Shozan, then directing the battle like Hanbei to cause the battle to drag on, Yoshiharu will

then use this chance to replace the Goemon on her way to Todai Temple and together with Zenki infiltrate Mt Shozan to search for and rescue Kanbei,

"What a complex strategy, tee hee hee, letting this foolhardy warrior take command of the battle and this little brat to do a ninja's work, using normal ways it would take at least a decade"

"That would be too late, the minute the Mori Main Army arrives in Harima, Kanbei would be executed, and the time left is only five days, that's why we need your help."

"The me who relied on Zenki had her business destroyed, Kanbei had already abandoned the Onmyou Arts and devoted herself to Nanban Science, so I don't have a reason to help you"

"Please emphasise a little! Come on!"

"Brat, the cost of my help is really high, lately I have been having headaches over the recent disappearance of my shikigami"

"Shikigami?"

"How about this, after you die give your soul to me, tee hee hee, after your life as a human has ended become a ghost and serve me, let this be my compensation"

"Wait, how can-!" Even though Shikanosuke tried to protest but Yoshiharu immediately without any hesitation answered.

"I understand, let's go with that!"

Granny Aga after hearing it examined Yoshiharu's face ,

"Hoo~, you're obviously a brat yet having such a heroic face surprisingly, you have my admiration"

Zenki gave a wry smile and said "It's a result of my master's influence"

"Alright brat, what I said just now was but a scare, due to Zenki and that little missy Takenaka Hanbei, Omyoudou will soon disappear, let this be my last job as an Onmyouji"

"Eh? Then the matter of compensation?"

"The descendant of Ashiya Doman who should be a hated enemy of Zenki joining hands together to add a final touch to the Onmyou History, isn't it fitting?"

"Eh? Eh? Just what is Zenki actually?"

"And you who without any hint of hesitation is willing to give up your own soul for my unbecoming disciple, what the hell are you guys still standing there for, hurry and start training!"

"Really? Thanks so much Oba-san!"

"My lord, we've done it!"

"Boy, I already told you to not call me ‘Oba-san’ already, don't take me for a fool, nyee hee hee"

Granny Aga eventually promised to help Yoshiharu and Shikanosuke practice to accomplish the seemingly impossible plan,

What the Shikanosuke who would lead the feint unit had to learn was definitely not the 'Ambush from all sides' tactic that was impossible to learn in a short time, but the Ashiya Clan's 'Kimon Tonkou' military tactic that

was passed down their clan from generation to generation.

[2]

While Yoshiharu as the commando unit infiltrated Mt Shozan had to learn one of the ancient arts of the Onmyouji that existed till now 'Art of Invisibility' —— a technique to let oneself disappear from the sight of others .

Granny Aga told them that they could learn these techniques in three days,

"Logically, to let a novice learn this sophisticated art is near impossible, so the help of Zenki and I is definitely essential, and should suffice."

"I'm extremely grateful."

Yoshiharu at this point in time felt overflowing happiness and gratitude in his heart.

A glimmer of light could finally be seen in the darkness.

Even he himself subconsciously said "Wait for me Kanbei"

"Oi oi Sagara Yoshiharu, if you want to learn a skill completely in three days which is supposed to take a long time to learn, half-baked actions are not enough, it's still too early to relax."

"I understand Zenki! It's finally time for us Sagara Corps to begin our counterattack!"

"Yeah! I will also ambush! Sacrifice! Die on the battlefield! Striving with this kind of resolution my lord!"

"Shikanosuke-chan, those three phrases are NG words"

"I'm no longer a child, please use my name Shikanosuke to call me my lord, this is part of the etiquette of being companions, or is it that my lord actually in his heart hasn't thought of me as a comrade, Ah this is also part of the Seven sufferings and Eight pains."

Haa ha haa, Shikanosuke for some reason gasped for breath,

"Okay Okay, I understand Shikanosuke!"

"Please, call my name with a brusquer and tougher tone"

"What's wrong? Never mind, if Goemon handles it, we don't need to worry about the matter regarding Hanbei anymore, I finally can see the dawn!"

"Oh? Sagara Yoshiharu, since when did you start calling my master using her name?"

"Ara, now that you mention it since when did it start?"

"He he, my master has finally been recognised by you as a mature woman huh? It's something worth celebrating"

"Maybe it's so, I only understand that if I take Hanbei for a child it's too disrespectful."

"So my lord is saying that I'm more childish than Hanbei, when I obviously have a nice body, ah right, it has to be talking about my brain. Then obviously my lord thinks of me as childish, right my lord? Ah, is this also one of the Seven sufferings and Eight pains?"

"Don't go into wild flights of imagination! Speaking of which isn't Sunekosuri still asleep? Oi Wake up!"

Pomf, Sunekosuri extended out it's little head from Yoshiharu's chest.

Sunekosuri was a man made artificial spirit made by combining the efforts of Kanbei and Rikyu, it looked like a small dog which could be placed on one's palm perfectly.

"If I'm seen by the granny will I be put inside the cauldron and cooked? Tremble tremble"

"Of course not, after we reach Mt Shozan we need to rely on your nose to find Kanbei, please don't be asleep at that time."

"Don't cook Sunekosuri, don't cook Sunekosuri!"

Finally saw a ray of hope and had a renewed sense of fighting spirit, the trio of the Sagara corps,

As well as one pet...

Granny Aga put down the spoon in her hand and slowly said,

"Yareyare, I originally thought that girl who was overly smart would find this life to be a rocky one, but at least she found a good master."

"I say boy, there's one thing that has to be prearranged, " Granny Aga continued "No matter what happens after this, you cannot give up on your training, or else you can never learn the 'Art of Invisibility', there's no problem right? Tee hee hee."

"Ah, bring it on! Let's immediately start training now!"

As he said that Yoshiharu forcefully beat his chest once ,

Pa!

"It hurts, it hurts!"

Subconsciously exerting too much force, Yoshiharu accidentally smashed Sunekosuri flat,

"Ah Sorry!"

"Meat that has been pounded will have a more tender taste, right? Don't cook me, don't cook me!"

"About that, you don't happen to have a phobia of cauldrons right?"

Like this, the Sagara Corp's counterattack commences in three days.

~Translator's Notice:

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Chapter 2 : The Revolt of Matsunaga Danjo

In this sengoku era, Yamato is still called the “ Kingdom of Gods.”

Even after the moving of the palace over to Kyoto, the Buddhist influence did not reduce at all but was instead opposing the control and intervention of the samurai.

In actual fact, it was the monks of Koufuku temple that had control over Yamato with their force comparable to Mount Hiei.

A saying goes by that those samurais who came from Yamato were all monks from Koufuku temple who had once again embrace the mundane life.

And close by Koufuku temple was the Todai Temple which was also known for it's giant Buddha statue.

Known as the destroyer of traditions, Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide, ever since the time when she was a retainer general for the Miyoshi clan, had always been fixated and persistent on ruling Yamato.

Since her submission to Nobuna and passing over the command of the capital over to her, Hisahide had been

putting all her heart into ruling over Yamato, and the tension between her and Koufuku and Todai temple had been rising day by day.

There are a total of two bases that Matsunaga Hisahide can reside in Yamato.

The first being Shigisan castle, built on the spectacular and a natural fortress, Mount Shigi. Though that place is easily defended, it is far from the heart of Yamato, and that was Nara.

The other being Tamonyama castle, a fortress that was build after destroying a mountain temple located right on a path between Kyoto and Nara. On it's peaks, the fortress can easily looked upon Koufuku and Todai temple.

It's for the precise reason that Matsunaga Hisahide wishes to one day finish things off with her destined enemy, the Koufuku temple that she had build this frontline base right in front of them.

Hisahide was a war orphan who lost both her parents during the massacre between the Buddhism forces of Kyoto and had seek refuge in Koufuku temple when she was small.

However, rather than the Buddhist teachings, it was the skills with the Juumonji spear which Hisahide learned in Koufuku Temple.

They were a powerful armed group similar to Mount Hiei, well known for being the best when it comes to spearmanship.

Not long after leaving Koufuku temple, Hisahide was feared in the capital for her outstanding Juumonji spear skills.

In battles, she had said many times that she wanted to burn down the giant Buddha statue of Todai temple, which is the Nara Buddha.

With the blood of Persians running in her veins, Hisahide did not acknowledge this country's tradition and authority at all.

In Kyoto, she assaulted the Ashikaga clan, destroyed the Ashikaga shogunate and had even coerced Nobuna to burn Mount Hiei.

Though the worst case scenario of burning Mount Hiei was avoided in the end, the monks of Mount Hiei was

still stripped of their military power and lost it's strength to threaten the palace.

The reason why Nobuna's reputation was becoming worse every day might have been because she was relying heavily on Hisahide who had been destroying this country's tradition and authority repeatedly.

To this sengoku era, Matsunaga Hisahide is like a poisonous scorpion exuding a demonic light.

And right now, she is leading her troops inside Tamonyama castle at Nara.

Tamonyama castle was a strange mountain fortress too .

It has a four level Tenshu that had never been seen in Japan before.

Under moonlight, it's pure white walls reflect a gentle light.

But it's roof tiles are pitch black.

Outside the castle, various flowers like mustard plants, roses form a weird garden filled with beautiful flowers.

But once one enters the castle, they could see never seen before golden pillars and mysterious wall paintings from other countries.

Such a strange castle form a distinct contrast with the traditional Todai temple and that might be Hisahide's intention.

Tonight, a bright shooting star was dragging it's long tail as it flew past the sky.

In the darkness, a bunch of people was silencing their footsteps as they walked the streets of Nara.

"What a strange castle, my eyes are all dizzy from it."

"Boss, this is the rumored Tamonyama castle, huh? There's a distinct difference between it and a Namban styled castle."

"Uhh, I don't understand it's taste."

"But it's quite compatible to that unlucky jinx."

"I heard the princess of the Oda clan plans to build a Tenchu imitating this at Azuchi castle."

"That is because Hime looks upon Matsunaga-shi like her own mother."

"Talking about this, I had been feeling weird all this while, just which parts of each other did they feel attracted to?"

"It might be that they both loves to burn things up, haha."

Correct, this bunch of people is the lolicon squad, Kawanamishuu that follows the loli ninja, Goemon.

After becoming the chief of the Sagara clan, Goemon was still wearing her ninja garb and being active as a ninja.

Yoshiharu had once persuaded her, "You are already a famous samurai now, at least choose your symbol for yourself". But Goemon had chose the "卍" without thinking.

Isn't this a ninja still!? Yoshiharu can't help but retorted but Goemon had replied with a hint of hesitation , "I'm a ninja for life."

Seeing the Kawanamishuu looking at Tamonyama castle and being distracted, Goemon ordered, "Don't look at it."

"Let's not think too much about Matsunaga-shi, our mission is to steal from Todai temple."

"Uhhuhh, Matsunaga Hisahide's breasts are needlessly big and her whole body exudes such a lewd atmosphere, what an evil woman...."

"But shouldn't we ask her for help, Boss?"

"Yeah, we don't have much time."

"It's the critical period right now that decides whether will we be able to save that serious and strict Hanbei-chan."

"Even if Matsunaga Hisahide wants my body in exchange, I will give that evil woman my purity while shedding blood tears!"

"Me too! Though I will definitely bear unrecoverable wounds for the rest of my life if I hand my body over to that old woman."

"But this is to save the cute Hanbei-chan."

"CORRECT, BASTARDS! CUTENESS IS JUSTICE!"

"If it's to protect Boss's life, I don't mind even if I have to hand over my butt to that Sagara brat."

"You can't call him a brat anymore, Sagara Yoshiharu is now our master. Call him the lord."

"Yeah! If it's for the boss, I can even be the lord's pet!"

Uhh, nobody want the bodies of you guys.... Though Goemon mumbled softly but no one seems to hear it.

"Ara, it's lucky that my lord is a straight guy without any interest in young girls and men's buttholes. What a relief."

"For now, we should greet Matsunaga Hisahide, Boss!"

"Even if we can't get her help, she won't obstruct us."

"Yeah yeah."

"But she might want us to give this muscular body over to her as reward."

"Uhh, somehow, I have a premonition of stepping on a tiger's tail."

But it's true that the Todai temple is extremely close to Tamonyama castle.

If it's just a greeting, it won't take up much time.

"Then let's greet her then."

"So that's it then, Boss, let's do it."

"It'll be bad if we activate any strange traps if we sneak in, let's enter from the front door."

Goemon curiously looked at the various strange decorations of Tamonyama castle too.

Different from Japan's ninja and Onmyouji, Hisahide is well versed in the illusions from other countries.

At the junction towards Todai temple, Goemon and the others turned towards Tamonyama castle but at this moment...

"Eh?"

"The gates of Tamonyama castle opened?"

"It's so late already, what the hell are they doing?"

"Are they welcoming Boss?"

"No...Noo, the Matsunaga army is moving out!"

"WHAT!?!?!?"

That fluttering flag was indeed Matsunaga Hisahide's symbol.

Spearman squads...

Cannon squads...

Bowman squads...

There were a few types of soldiers that even Goemon and the rest didn't see before.

And the soldiers of the Matsunaga army all looked abnormal.

Their eyes were all cloudy as they kept sprouting nonsense.

As if they are drunk or they are already not of this world.

"The enemy is at Kyoto!"

"The master is going to attack Oda Nobuna right now!"

"Our master Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide-sama is the true ruler of men!"

It's a revolt! The vice-captain of the Kawanamishuu Maeda can't help but shouted out.

"Why did Matsunaga Hisahide suddenly revolt!?"

"This goes beyond any common sense!"

"It might just be her habit!"

"Yeah! She had attacked the princess of the Oda clan in Kyoto before."

"Here they come!"

The Kawanamishuu left the road and hide in the forest .

Not long after, the soldiers with a drunk face walked past the Kawanamishuu one after the other.

At this moment, Goemon who was hanging on a tree branch suddenly thought of something.

"...Uhh... Don't tell me this is that future that Sagara-shi had said before....!?"

The current Nobuna that is in Honnou temple has only a few aides and body guards.

And what's worst is that Nobuna herself had collapsed .

"The Sagara corps is at Harima, Akechi-shi is at Tamba , Niwa-shi at Wakasa, Shibata-shi at Echizen, Takigawa at Ise... Uhh, Hime-sama has no one guarding her!"

Nara is very close to Kyoto.

Much closer to the Oda clan generals scattered everywhere.

If one was to revolt, now will be the most opportune moment.

All this makes Goemon think about that future that Sagara Yoshiharu had once told her about... The Incident at Honnouji.

But why this moment?

"This is the worst."

"It's what you're best at, Boss. Choose between the two , whether to steal the Rajantai or to stop the revolt?"

"Ahhhh! If it's Sagara-shi, he won't abandon both Takenaka-shi and Hime, zhat(what) should we do!?"

"Our boss had been infected with the lord's bad habit."

"But such a boss is just too cute!"

"Shut up! At least let me stop Matsunaga-shi! If we can't stop her, we will pink oh samping.(Think of something)."

"No Boss, that woman is too dangerous!"

"We will go too!"

"Not allowed to follow."

After she said that, Goemon stepped on a tree branch and jumped out.

"BOSSSSSSS!"

In the short amount of time that Goemon and the Kawanamishuu talked, the situation had become even more complicated.

The Matsunaga army had set ablaze a patch of forest in the territory of Koufuku temple, burned through a path and started their attack.

The shocked monks were shouting, "Uwahh, Danjo attacked!" as they gathered in panic and started a chaotic battle with the Matsunaga army.

Their opponent is their arch enemy, Matsunaga Hisahide.

It's that Matsunaga Hisahide who escaped from Koufuku temple and become the master of Yamato after repeatedly revolting and fighting against the monks.

It's that Matsunaga Hisahide who declared that she will burn down the great Buddha of Todai temple,

and the one who allied with Oda Nobuna who almost burnt Mount Hiei.

Though the monks of Koufuku temple who gathered are panicky, they did not let down their guard.

No, it's more like, they were already prepared for such a moment.

"You're finally come, huh? Enemy of Buddhism, Matsunaga Hisahide!"

"When the jinx star shone brightly high up on the night sky, I know it will become like this!"

"The Buddha had already give us a premonition of your intentions!"

"Listen everyone! We must protect the Buddha statue!"

But there's still a problem, the one that Matsunaga Hisahide is betraying is the enemy of Buddhism, Oda Nobuna who attempted to burn Mount Hiei.

"If we fight Matsunaga Danjo, won't we become the allies of Oda Nobuna?"

"Rather than Oda Nobuna who we never met before, it's the enemy right in front of our eyes that's more important!"

"If you guys still have the time to talk nonsense, they have already attacked here!"

"The foolish Danjo, isn't it ok to ignore us if she wants to invade Kyoto?"

"This situation really makes me wonder why did she build a Tamonyama castle on the path that connects here to Kyoto."

"She must have not want us monks to pincer attack Yamato which will become an empty castle."

"Looks like we both look at each other as destined enemies."

"I don't even know just how much frustration I had bottled till now, but tonight we have something planned, it's time to settle the debt!"

The opinions of the monks are totally in sync, and that's to "fight it out with Matsunaga Hisahide."!

"...Sorry, umm, there's something I don't know if I should say, if we fight against Matsunaga now, won't we be helping the Oda clan? Our situation will be kinda weird, we should think through it."

There's only one monk called Tsutsui Shouken who asked everyone for restraint.

But at this moment, almost all the monks had charged right into the side of the Matsunaga army and started the battle.

"Don't fear, we have the Buddhist guardian, the three head and six arms Asura's protection!"

"Tonight, let us destroy the enemy of Buddhism, Matsunaga Danjo!"

There are a few monks too who had the Asura's talisman hanging on their chest before charging into the enemy's formation bare-handed.

For one, this is to motivate their allies, the other is to wish for the powers of Asura to shock the enemy.

"Hahaha, this is our secret plan. The enemy's soldiers will soon fear the powers of Asura and scatter!"

"Exactly, ordinary soldiers have no guts to be the enemy of Buddha."

This isn't just a simple battle.

The enemy is that Matsunaga Hisahide who betrayed Koufuku temple, betrayed Buddhism.

So even if they use such an extreme method, it will definitely be forgiven.

But the enemy Matsunaga army's soldiers had a confused expression even when they are right in the midst of the battle.

No, after seeing the talisman of Asura, they seem to become excited.

"..... Answer our prayers, Ahura Mazda."

"....Who decides the trajectory of the sun and stars."

"..... Who decides whether the moon wanes."

"......Please bless us with your intelligence, Ahura Mazda!"

They snatched the talisman on the body of those monks as they started moving forward in a crazed manner.

"What? What are these people talking about!?"

"Why, why aren't the power of Asura punishing them and yet?"

"It even blessed them with it's protection!"

I don't understand... The unease was spread amongst the monks in an instant as their formation collapsed soon after.

Facing the fearful monks, the Matsunaga army showed not a hint of mercy as they extend their hands and snatch their Asura talisman.

"UWAHHHH!"

"SAVE ME!!!"

Seeing that the frontlines had collapsed, the monks at the back pulled out the second secret weapon that they had prepared just for Matsunaga Hisahide.

The secret weapon that the monks of Todai and Koufuku temple had prepared together is...

"Don't retreat! The divine beast from the south is here!"

"The deers are here!"

"Ngeeh! Ngeeh!"

Correct, it's the deers

Shikas(Deers) had been viewed as a divine beasts from ancient times.

Though it might not be useful against the demonic Matsunaga Hisahide, the normal soldiers will never have the guts to attack them.

Upon releasing them, the trained deers aimed their sharp antlers and charged towards the Matsunaga army.

But this plan was still useless towards Hisahide.

"Biiiiooooohhh!"

"Wha....."

"WHAT IS THAT!?!?!?"

"BIIIIOOOOOHHH!"

"UWAHHHHH!"

From the midst of the Matsunaga army came never seen before huge beasts, their roar easily make the deers trembled in fear.

The queen from another country, Matsunaga Hisahide was riding on a huge beast that had a long nose as she commanded the soldiers in battle.

"WHAT IS THAT!?"

"MO...MON....MONSTERRRRRRRRR!"

That was an elephant.

Hisahide leisurely sat on the elephant she bought from Namban, on her hand was a long smoke pipe.

"Hoho, there's only one thing I want and that is the head of Oda Nobuna. All who opposes me will die, haha. .. Hahahaha"

The deers who never seen such a huge animal had all turn their heads around and escaped to the depths of the forest.

The monks had no more leeway to think about a thing like what will happen if they become the allies of the Oda clan.

The things happening right in front of their eyes were the actual disasters!

If they didn't defeat Hisahide right here, it was without a doubt that Koufuku temple and Todai temple would both be reduced to ruins by her.

There's no doubt about it.

Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide plans to use this revolt to eliminate all the enemies obstructing her, which are Nara's shrines and temples, reducing all of them to ruins.

"Allow me to enjoy the pleasure I should have enjoyed the last time I tried burning Mount Hiei."

The fire in the forest is getting bigger.

During the midst of the fire, Hisahide suddenly shouted out loud.

"..... Ah....Ahahahahaha, burn, burn it all! Burn all and everything to ashes!"

Her voice is extremely weird, almost as if she was possessed.

"De....De....Demon!"

"Ju...Jus....Jus....Just what is she!?"

The monks felt fear from the bottom of their heart.

If this goes on, the five towers that the Koufuku temple is so proud of will be burned down! If we can't protect the Buddha statue, the Todai temple's great Buddha and the Shousouin that has all the treasures will.....

"Why... Why do you hate us monks so much?"

"Ya...Yamato is a province of gods, we will never hand it over to a demonic woman like you!"

The monks were furiously thrusting the spears in their hands by the elephant's feet but with a single swing of the long nose of the elephant's nose, it sweeps the monks like a grass cutter.

This is a never seen before beast from another country.

Even if they want to attack, they have no idea just where the weak points are.

And...

"..... Answer our prayers, Ahura Mazda."

"....Who decides the trajectory of the sun and stars."

"..... Who decides whether the moon wanes."

"......Please bless us with your intelligence, Ahura Mazda!"

Even if they were cut, the soldiers of the Matsunaga army continued to march forwards with a confused face.

"Bastard Danjo! Don't tell me you gave these soldiers mustard poison!?"

"These fragrance, it can't be wrong!"

Hisahide propped up her smoke pipe and said while she narrowed her eyes.

"Foolish humans, that deity that you guys know as Asura is Ahura Mazda~"

"Ahura.... what!?"

This woman's state of mind is definitely abnormal now .

How scary...

At this moment, under the brilliance of the jinx star in the sky and the eyes of Hisahide who was shining with a brightness unique to only predators, it's almost like she had turned into the goddess of a different religon.

But it's definitely not a loving goddess.

But a goddess of destruction with an air of crazed passion, filled with rage towards this sengoku era that's filled with contradiction.

"You ignorant people who had locked yourselves all this while in this small island country, I will teach you all out of kindness of my heart. Ahura Mazda is a Persian god that disappeared in the long flow of history. It is the first god who judge justice and evil, a god that summons disasters in this world and the god of destruction that gives the final judgment over fools."

No...

This woman right in front of them is totally different from the Matsunaga Hisahide who always have an alluring smile on her face.

Her two eyes exude a golden brilliance.

Both eyes are as if they are ones from a snakes, staring at it's prey.

These are evil eyes!

So this is her real nature!?

This had far surpassed that of a poisonous scorpion!

"Matsunaga Danjo! If you aren't kept by Koufuku temple when you're small, you will have perished amidst the flames of war!"

"Had you forgotten the gratitude?"

"Remember the teachings of Buddhism!"

Ku.... Kukuku...

Hearing them, Hisahide laughed out loud.

Her laughter was so cold that it would freeze anyone who heard her to the ground, but the smile on her face was as attractive as a goddess.

"Gratitude? The only things I remember are the pain that those hypocrites gave me as they torture me, all the while forcing upon me the ideology of women being dirty, as well as the skills of using a spear to kill!"

Just by locking gazes with the current Hisahide was enough to tighten your heart.

As if the evils facing her could not find any place to hide.

No, where had I seen this pair of eyes...

Asura...

These are the eyes of Asura!

"....Sc....Sc....Sca.... Too scary....!"

"Stop! Don't look over here!"

The monks finally started to cower.

But Hisahide continued to lead the soldiers controlled by drugs forward.

"I Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide, under the name of Ahura Mazda orders to destroy all who abuses the name of gods and Buddha to blatantly militarized themselves, torture women, shaken the country and continued to take from the people. Burn Todai and Koufuku temple down to ashes!"

But the Shosoin of Todai temple contains the Rajantai that must be used to save Hanbei.

At this moment, Goemon finally reached her.

She dropped down onto the saddle that Hisahide was sitting on the elephant.

"Are you insane, Matsunaga-shi!?"

"You're wrong, Ninja. This is the true me."

"To save Takenaka-shi, the Rajantai inside Todai temple is necessary."

"What about it? I want to burn down Todai temple, all who opposes me shall all be burned too."

"Looks like even if I persuade you not to revolt, it's useless!"

"Correct, before I hugged the head of Oda Nobuna which is still flowing fresh blood with my two hands, I will never stop."

"Why... Why did you do such a thing to Hime who you doved(loved) as a daughter!?"

".... It's because this inauspicious star is just so pretty..."

Looks like she herself had been affected by the mustard poison... Goemon analyzed.

If this was the case, I can only kill her.

"....Your life, I'm taking it."

Goemon slashes apart the roof of the saddle and threw a shuriken at Hisahide.

And then, using the opening where Hisahide used the smoke pipe in her hands to deflect the shuriken, Goemon charged at her with a dagger in her hands.

The place she aimed could only be one.

And that was the neck of Hisahide.

"Can't let you burn Todai temple."

"It's useless..."

Goemon suddenly found herself being fixated in the air, unable to get near to Hisahide at all.

"Huh?"

It's the puppets.

A puppet in the shape of a girl was tightly wrapping herself to Goemon's body.

The hands of the puppet turned to a weird angle, like the tentacles of a squid, they snatched away Goemon's freedom.

The puppets are just dolls, and not a living thing so they will not emit any killing intent.

Not discovering this point is the reason why Goemon lost.

At this moment, the red eyes of Goemon and the golden eyes of Hisahide were crossed gazes.

The always calm Goemon let out a confused sound.

"....Matsunaga-shi....!?"

"Shut up, Ninja. Stop talking, die."

Kacha....

From the air, flesh blood start gushing out...

and lands on the heads of the soldiers by the legs of the elephant.

"Uwahhhh!"

"Bo....Boss...!"

"Yo...You gotta be joking....!"

Using the chaos, the Kawanamishuu who planned to climb up had all let out shrieks of shock.

And the Matsunaga army was scattering those monks, filled with resolve to die as they shout "If we retreat here, Buddhism and Yamato will be destroyed!"

Kyoto, Honnou temple.

On her bed, after hearing the new aide Senchiyo reported, "Matsunaga Danjo had revolted at Yamato."

Nobuna only said "Dearuka..."

and keep staring at the ceiling, not moving an inch.

The smart bishoujo aide Manmi Senchiyo was in actual fact a spy that the Kampaku, Konoe Sakihisa sent as part of the anti-Nobuna force.

She had faked Nobuna's order and asked Yoshiharu to "execute Kuroda Kanbei's younger sister" and the one who stopped Yoshiharu from talking with Nobuna at Honnou temple was her too.

After gaining Nobuna's trust, Senchiyo started to sow discord in the Oda clan from the interior.

Konoe Sakihisa had once employed an assassin to try to snipe Nobuna.

But in the end, it failed.

Not just having extremely tenacious will to live, she had the famous doctor Belchior Manase on her side and Matsunaga Hisahide who was well versed in using poisons.

In such a situation, assassinating Nobuna in a day was extremely difficult, so Senchiyo employed a long term technique like slowly tightening the noose on Nobuna's neck.

And Nobuna did not notice Konoe Sakihisa's schemes and Senchiyo's true identity till now.

Just by looking, Konoe Sakihisa was just a normal official with black teeth and pale skin.

And to unify Japan, Nobuna had tried her best to get together the ruined palace.

Abandoning the century long war, the Ashikaga shogunate was no longer suitable to rule this country. Nobuna was considering to change the forgotten palace to a symbol that represents the new unified Japan.

So the idea that the leader of the officials to try his best to eliminate her, no, to be dumb enough to do that had not entered her mind at all.

"The "self-proclaimed shogun" Ashikaga Yoshiaki that the Mori clan supported had sent letters persuading them to surrender to all the daimyos of the provinces,

even to the generals of the Oda clan which were scattered everywhere."

To make Nobuna even more suspicious, Senchiyo continued to say.

"I think Matsunaga Hisahide is under the influence of Ashikaga Yoshiaki, such a situation will likely happen elsewhere too.

Nobuna has no more ideas.

Because of the golden skull incident of Asai Nagamasa , she was despised by her birth mother, Tsuchida Gozen.

Though she did not have any impression, she had given the order of executing Shojyomaru and had betrayed Yoshiharu and Kanbei.

And now, even Matsunaga Hisahide who was like her second mother had finally betrayed her.

(Danjo had once betrayed me too, but it was to test whether I have the potential to rule the world. It's different this time, Danjo had truly abandoned me.)

Anger? No, she did not have such an emotion in her heart now.

(It's I who betrayed my companions first, this is just what I deserved.)

Tears were once again flowing out despite her wishes.

Following her birth father, even her god-father Saitou Dousan had passed away.

Unrecoverable cracks had formed in the relationship with her birth mother and now, even Matsunaga Hisahide who was like her god-mother had betrayed her, she had lost the irreplaceable Sagara Yoshiharu and Kuroda Kanbei who bears the same dream of crossing the vast seas.

(It's reasonable that I will be abandoned by Yoshiharu after the order of executing Shojyomaru, but why even Danjo....?)

Why did things become like this, just why...?

"....Uhh.... Uh.... Uhhh...."

Nobuna's strong heart started to collapse.

She did not know that Senchiyo is currently celebrating in her heart (Everything is going smoothly, with this, all will be over!)

"Hime-sama, I had chosen the list of retainers that are most likely to revolt, with the start of executing Matsunaga Hisahide, please eliminate the traitors of the Oda clan."

The list that Senchiyo had prepared includes, Sagara Yoshiharu, Akechi Mitsuhide, Shibata Katsuie, Niwa Nagahide and Takigawa Kazumasu, all core members of the Oda clan.

Though she had prepared this list long ago and had planned to submit it once the chance presents itself, but even Senchiyo herself did not expect that the "chance" will come so soon. All these are thanks to Hisahide " timely" revolt.

Rather than assassinating Oda Nobuna herself, this is the determining strike. Using Oda Nobuna herself to clear the Oda clan's retainers, the Oda clan will definitely be destroyed. Just by thinking all these, Senchiyo can't help but laughed out in her heart.

".... I.... I see."

"Please give the order to execute them."

"....But...."

Nobuna can't not hesitate.

The names on the list are all irreplaceable companions that had fight with her from Owari and Mino.

Though she had made an unforgivable mistake.

But even so, she don't believe it no matter what.

"Hime-sama, to stabilize the Oda clan, the master have to clear off all unstable elements in the interior of the clan ! If we don't take this chance that Matsunaga Hisahide had just revolted, we won't make it in time!"

"....I can't."

"If you can't do it, Hime-sama will be killed!

"....Such a thing... It's impossible."

"The proof had already been assembled."

"....Impossible... This is impossible!"

Senchiyo bite down on her teeth.

A little more!

Even when she had been forced to such an extent, Nobuna did not abandon her trust for her retainers.

"Shibata Katsuie and the rest had been feeling jealousy over the fact that Sagara Yoshiharu had been tasked with being the commander against the Mori clan."

"Such a thing isn't possible, I don't believe it!"

"And after reaching Harima, Sagara Yoshiharu had a beautiful princess knight named Yamanaka Shikanosuke as his subordinate as he immersed himself everyday in debauchery with her."

"....Eh?"

Senchiyo finally discovered Nobuna's weak point.

So this is it, huh?

Nobuna's weakness is the rumors about Sagara Yoshiharu.

For some reason, compared to the rest of her retainers, only Sagara Yoshiharu was unable to obtain all of Nobuna's trust.

And the essence of it is because she was filled with suspicions over Sagara Yoshiharu's pervertedness.

Though she feels that it might be a little childish, but Senchiyo had decided to attack here.

"Yamanaka Shikanosuke was a vagrant who once served the Amago clan. Her beauty had been known as the no 1 beauty of Amago as she had always been fighting for the sake of reviving the Amago clan. And, Yamanaka Shikanosuke.... Her breasts are much bigger than Hime-sama."

"Br....Breasts!?"

It's effective.

Though I don't know why, but it's effective!

"Sagara Yoshiharu had agreed that as long as Yamanaka Shikanosuke use her body in exchange for his help to obtain Izumo and Shikanosuke had also agreed to become Sagara Yoshiharu's wife. From then on, the both of them had been immersed over each other's body."

"....Th....Tha.... That Saru....!"

"After having her breasts touched by that uncouth monkey, for some reason Yamanaka Shikanosuke had an enjoyable expression on her face. And the fact that Sagara Yoshiharu is a lecher is already a well known fact. "

"Du....During the time that I had been sobbing over the fact that I had killed Shojyomaru by accident, that fellow actually brought a woman back to camp and ru....rubs her breast....!"

Senchiyo shouted out in her heart (Damn it...)

The eyes of Oda Nobuna who should be in depressed had somehow started to emit sparks of anger.

Her whole body was exuding scary vibes.

Damn, that strike just now had an opposite effect!

Should I have continued elaborating on the revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide?

Not serving Nobuna long enough, Senchiyo did not have a complete grasp of her complicated emotions.

"Please wait, Hime-sama! Rather than Sagara Yoshiharu, please do something about Matsunaga Hisahide's revolt! According to reports, Matsunaga Hisahide had already moved out towards Kyoto! If we can't even hold on to Kyoto, the anti-Nobuna forces will definitely be roused up. Please give the order to attack!"

"But... right now I only have a few aides and small amounts of bodyguards. Such a tiny amount of manpower isn't enough for battle."

"But Matsunaga Hisahide does not have any intention to show mercy, and if we ran away from here, we will be ridiculed by everyone."

"....."

Nobuna had seemingly lose any motivation to live on.

Her reason is telling her to bear the ridicule and live on...

But after betraying Yoshiharu and Kanbei, I had been abandoned by Danjo. I had lost the right to be the ruler of men now, right?

When Yoshiharu had attacked both Juubei and me in that tea room, that lecherous behavior of him had been exposed.

"....I can never get it, huh?"

Nobuna finally discovered the fatal weakness buried deep in her heart.

(Being despised by Mother, there's a huge hole in my heart that I can never fill. There might be a time that I will do cruel things that even I myself don't believe.)

It's enough already.

I had lost Danjo, lost Yoshiharu and lost Harima. I betrayed others and had been betrayed by others too... It's enough already, a thing like the world....

A thing like the world, I should give it to Juubei who is luckier than me and had grown up basking in her mother's love....

Just when Nobuna is about to say the line that gives up everything, suddenly.....

"Oh~ hohohoho! To actually dare block my path, what a bunch of rude aides!"

Someone that no one expected suddenly budged into Nobuna's bedroom.

"You will disturb the princess."

"Please return."

"You can't go in."

Though the aides tried their best trying to stop her, they were all kicked off by elegant kicks.

"Oh~ Hohoho! Nobuna, how's your body? This Seii taishogun Imagawa Yoshimoto had personally come to see you! Ima! Gawa! Yoshi! Moto!"

Correct.

This unexpected person is the current shogun puppet, Imagawa Yoshimoto.

The multiple lines of defense that Senchiyo had spent her time devising had all been forcefully trespassed by Yoshimoto's elegant kicks.

Looking at this, even Senchiyo can't help but let out a lament.

"Just what did you come here for?"

"Who are you? I'm here to talk to Nobuna."

"Ehhh, it's just a little more.... No one called for you, hurry and go back!"

"That can't do."

With a thud, Imagawa Yoshimoto's feet landed right in the abdomen of Senchiyo who was charging over.

"Imagawa style, secret technique of soccer, "Dancing wind of the white bird", there's still much for you to learn , aide."

Uwahh, with a lament, Senchiyo's whole body twisted as her head landed on the tatami mat.

Nobuna was shocked by what happened in front of her.

"Yo...Yo...Yo...You....You.... What are you doing here? I did not call you."

"Even so, when the biggest thing in history is happening, I will appear since I'm the Seii Taishogun."

Seeing Yoshimoto opening up her fan and laughing loudly, Nobuna can't help but stood up and shout...

"....Everything is already over! The real shogun is back, everyone are thinking that it's me who burn Kamigyo! Saru had cheated on me and I had even ordered Saru to execute Kanbei's younger sister! I had become a true demon lord of the sixth realm! I'm alone already!"

At the same time she was shouting loudly, tears were pouring out again.

"It's obvious that Danjo would abandon me! Tenka Fubu is finished already!"

But Yoshimoto was still "Oh~ Hohoho" laughed loudly .

"Well well, just because you did not come out of Honnou temple at all, I had personally came to visit you. I did not expect that great Nobuna-sama to actually wish to give up the quest of Tenka Fubu?"

"I already said, I had betrayed my companions and been abandoned by them! Walking the path of the demon lord by myself is something that I can't bear!"

PIAK!!!!!!

「信奈さん？　あなたはいつから、そんなに弱くなりましたの？」

Nobuna's vision was violently shift to the side all of a sudden.

After half a second of delay, she then discovered that she had been slapped by Yoshimoto.

"....!?"

"Nobuna? When did you become so weak? Where did the you who was so gallant in the Battle of Okehazama go to?"

Yoshimoto was furious.

"During that time, you were misunderstood by almost everyone, and ridiculed like an idiot. But even so, you had only been moving forwards the path that you firmly believed in, that's what a true hero is! And now just when you've achieved something, why are you shutting yourself in a room and crying non-stop like a coward!? Are you the Oda Nobuna that I had acknowledged?"

"....Yoshimoto"

"How could you.... You are the one who defeated me! Then replacing Imagawa Yoshimoto to unify the world is

your inescapable fate. Use your hands and courage to achieve it! You had once defeated I who lead a huge army under unfavorable terms! But now you...."

Nobuna feels her eyes starting to regain strength.

"I will never agree to a thing like surrendering before even fighting, I will never acknowledge it!"

Yes...

I had always been charging at the forefront of the troops.

Even if no one understands me...

Ever since meeting Yoshiharu, understanding each other and having the love Dousan and Danjo poured on me like I'm their daughter, I had lost the composure of the "Fool of Owari".

(I wish for Yoshiharu and Danjo's love with all my heart but after knowing the feeling of being loved, I had forgotten the principle of "Forging my own fate with my own will.")

Ever since that fire of Kamigyo, Nobuna who was lost was finally revived at this moment.

She had gotten back the real her.

But there's only one thing...

Only one thing that she can't forgive herself no matter what.

"I've betrayed Saru, during the time I fainted, I had given the order to execute Shojyomaru, only this..."

This is the only wound that can't be healed in Nobuna's heart. Upon thinking here, she once again had the urge to give up on herself.

But Yoshimoto "Oh~ Hohoho" laughed instead.

"Though Sagara Yoshiharu has a monkey face, he was the best man in the world that even I acknowledged! How can he accept such a dumb order silently!?"

"!?"

"That man will never kill girls! Nobuna, is that your extent of trust towards him!?"

"....But..."

"Sagara Yoshiharu is the world's biggest lecher who can't even abandon me who was the enemy of the Oda clan! So even though it's still a small girl, he will definitely save her!"

"....Yeah....!"

Yeah...

If my order was a mistake, Yoshiharu will never obey it.

And there's also Takenaka Hanbei beside Yoshiharu.

Those two will never obediently execute Shojyomaru.

"Why did I feel troubled, I believe in Saru... Believe in Yoshiharu!"

"Yeah, that man would definitely trust you and had long since discovered that there's something amiss in that order."

"Yeah! You're right!"

From god knows when, I had become fearful over losing Yoshiharu's love.

And so, I misunderstood,

and become suspicious,

as well as being passive and weak.

But as expected, I should obtain everything with my own hands.

Whether if it's the world, or Yoshiharu...

And Matsunaga Hisahide's heart, I will definitely show you that I will get it back!

The shadows clouding Nobuna's heart all this while was scattered at this moment.

"A life of 20 years..."

She started to sing the Atsumori softly.

This part of the Atsumori was sung before she headed out to battle with Imagawa Yoshimoto at Okehazama.

A life of 20 years,

Compared to the age of the world,

It is fleeting like a dream.

Is there anything,

That lasts forever.

Hanging on her waist the tiger skin and calabash,

Nobuna changed to the attire while she led Inuchiyo and the rest in the city and walked out of the bedroom.

"That's the way, Nobuna. Lead the aides and guards to battle it out with Matsunaga Hisahide!"

"....Yoshimoto, I won't thank you, but instead, I will build a Nijou castle for you."

"If so, I won't thank you for that too. As a shogun, having a castle for herself goes without saying, oh ~ hohohoho"

"I'm going out to battle Danjo now, are you joining as shogun?"

"Uhh, ow ow ouch... I'm actually ill... and going back to Nijou castle now."

"Oi~!"

Like the wind, Yoshimoto ran down the walkway in an instant and with a blink of an eye, she had disappeared.

After saying such things, she still hate fighting? Even Nobuna was shocked by this scene.

"Give me a horse!"

While walking forward, Nobuna gave the order to attack.

"Hi...Hime-sama, please wait."

"Senchiyo! Go and gather all of the aides and guards! I'm going out to face Danjo!"

"Ro...Roger."

"Where's the army of Danjo right now? Have they entered Kyoto?"

"No...Not yet. Matsunaga Hisahide is fighting with the monks of Koufuku temple at Nara. Unexpectedly, it has been going on for quite a long time."

"Eh? Koufuku temple?"

Weird, if they had ignored the monks, invade Kyoto and assault Honnou temple right away, I would have died instantly but why....

Nobuna have no feelings of hatred or anger towards Matsunaga Hisahide.

Even now, she admires her like her own mother.

That smiling face filled with love and her dangerous maternal side of her that uses poison to drug her just because she had put in too much feelings are all ways that she shows her love.

She did not forget the gratitude of being saved by Danjo during the retreat of Kanegasaki.

But why did she betray me, I must ask her the reason myself.

If it's because I do not have the capacity to be the ruler of men, I will prove to her that that's wrong.

For now, I must face Danjo on the battle.

"Manmi Senchiyo, since you suggested this battle, you will be the vanguard!"

"Eh? But I don't have any experience in actual combat, a heavy responsibility like the vanguard, I'm afraid..."

"No arguing! I will be standing at the forefront of the troops together with you, battle with me!"

"....Ye....yes."

"If you have any military talents, I will raise you to be a commander."

Nobuna's spirit had fully recovered by now.

Though Senchiyo had made various small actions in secret, the main force that confused Nobuna to that extent was actually the miasma released by the evil spirit at Kamigyo.

If that spirit controlled by Tsuchimikado released the miasma once again to Nobuna, it might go their way again but that's beyond what Senchiyo can control.

And once one was tainted by that miasma, recovery wasn't easy at all.

Both the mind and body should have been slowly tainted.

But who could have thought that Oda Nobuna was able to revive completely in such a short amount of time, this was far beyond what Senchiyo had predicted.

The mental strength of those with the talent to be the ruler of men are truly frightening. If I've known this from the beginning, I will have ignored master's order of "

Don't try assassinating, destroy Oda Nobuna's mind slowly instead." and kill her myself when she's in a coma.

But now, it's too late to cry over spilled milk.

Oda Nobuna's mental strength and her luck are abnormal.

I might fail too if I had tried assassinating her then.

Senchiyo decided in her heart (I can only treat this battle as a chance for the Oda clan to kill each other.)

"Roger, I Manmi Senichyo will risk her life to contribute for the Oda clan."

"That's the way."

And so, a small amount of troops started to move out from Honnou temple.

"The destination is Yamato, Nara!"

Changing back to the attire of the "fool", Nobuna moved at the head of the troops while Senchiyo and the rest of the aides moved in a hurry behind her.

Moving from Kyoto to Nara needs less than a day.

And that's why Nobuna can't understand why did Matsunaga Hisahide waste her time by fighting with the monks and giving up the chance to kill her.

But at the same time, this give rise to an opportunity to forgive Matsunaga Hisahide.

Hisahide and Dousan was once a pair of lovers.

But due to the huge gap of their age, I had been suspecting whether "Dousan was a lolicon"

From her heart, Nobuna did not wish to kill Matsunaga Hisahide.

But the spies that Konoe Sakihisa had put by Nobuna's side wasn't just Manmi Senchiyo herself.

Like the wind, after they passed through Mount Inari, they reached the huge lake connecting Kyoto and Yamato. From the depths of the lake, a huge black shadow rushed out to attack them.

The horse instinctively felt fear and won't move no matter how their masters urge them.

Nobuna and the aides had no choice but to stop.

"You.....!"

Correct.

This huge shadow that emerge from the depths of the lake was the same spirit that infected Nobuna with it's miasma at the fire of Kamigyo.

But at that time, the spirit was just a translucent shadow.

It can't let out any sound too.

But now, it have an alien-like body formed by blood red muscles.

There's no face, nor anything that can be called skin.

Both it's eyeballs and the nerves on it's face are bulging out.

It's voice was very similar to a human too.

A voice very close to a young man.

Somehow, it was filled with sadness, and at the same time, a voice filled with hatred.

"I didn't expect that you could stand again after you were infected by my miasma, Nobuna. Was my miasma not enough?"

(I seem to have heard this voice somewhere) Nobuna noticed this.

While hugging the horse tightly to soothe it's uneasiness, Senchiyo who was behind Nobuna laughed in her heart, (The spirit had mutated! You won't be able to win it with such a puny amount of soldiers, you Oda Nobuna! Be infected by it's miasma again and die.)

Takenaka Hanbei, the Onmyouji who was well-versed in defeating demons and spirits wasn't here.

Even if their opponent is a monster, Shibata Katsuie and Niwa Nagahide who can continue to fight without losing their calm weren't here too.

Though he was always running his tongue off, Sagara Yoshiharu who will always find some strange way to get all of us out in a crisis wasn't here too.

The opponent wasn't a samurai and not even a human. There is no way of knowing how to defeat it.

But I was caught unaware by it in Kamigyo.

I won't lose to it again.

A spirit who had forgotten what it is...!

I will definitely surpass you!

Leaving the trembling aides behind, Nobuna charged right at the spirit.

"DON'T DISTURB ME! I'M GOING TO MEET WITH DANJO RIGHT NOW!"

The spirit started crying,

"Oda Nobuna! I'm going to pull you into the darkness where not shred of light exist, together with your heart.... ."

~Translator's Notice:

This chapter is partly translated by our group members, Andrew and his team members. Do show them your thanks by going over to the group and drop a comment.

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Chapter 3 : Saving Kuroda Kanbei

At the Aga shrine, Yoshiharu and Shikanosuke are currently doing their training.

“Cough cough cough……”

Yoshiharu was tied upside down to a tree branch with a rope, while his head was soaked in the well, suffocating and yelling “ah…ah…ah…ah…”, he was finally pulled up after he struggled and turned voiceless.

“Ha…ha…ha…ha…ha…ha…”

Just after a breath, he was thrown back to the well again.

Such reckless training was going on and on..

“Cough... What is the meaning for such a training…?”

Being hanged upside down and drank tons of waters, Yoshiharu, whose stomach had already become a water tank, protested while holding his lifeline, Zenki.

“Enough talk. This training is to let your presense disappear in the face of enemies, an art of invisibility. This is a necessary training.”

“I could only imagine this as a type of swimming skill.”

“The one who will cast the invisibility spell will be I who will be going with you. All you need is to learn the spiritual state of nothingness.”

“Spiritual state of nothingness….cough.”

“Regardless of what kind of pain, until the level where one can’t even feel the difficulties of breathing, it's to this extent that you can't be disrupted by the surrounding, and becoming one with heaven and earth.”

“……I understand theoretically…… But won’t I die before reaching this limit?”

“Only by reaching this limit alive can you erase your presense from the enemies after I had cast the art of invisibility. If you die then you can’t save Kanbei. That’s it.”

"…… Wait…… My current situation….. I feel like I've seen this somewhere? Ah! That's right! Kanbei's tarot cards!"

While being hanged, Yoshiharu shouted and gusted water from his mouth.

"『Hanged Man! Your tarot's divination was correct Kanbei! Alright! Let's settle this in a go!"

"Hoho, you suddenly became so motivated."

"Wait for me, Kanbeiiiiii!"

Next to Yoshiharu, Shikanosuke is also starting training at Aga shrine.

Taking off her shirt and only using both hands to barely clutch her breasts, Shikanosuke was doing a Kekkafuza on the side of the sacred tree.

[3]

In addition, Shikanosuke is also blindfolded with a cloth.

Granny Aga hang herself on a tree branch with a hemp rope while rotating above Shikanosuke, while occasionally making a “Hey!” sound, using a keisaku to hit Shikanosuke’s snow white skin hardly.

“… Ah! That hurts…”

The blindfolded Shikanosuke doesn’t know when she will be hit again and at which place, so she will need to endure the pain of the whole body trembling again and again.

“Ha… Ha… Ha… What a suffering of Dukkha. Hit me more. More!”

“Hey, hey, hey. The skin already became red, but her motivation seems to be increasing still. What a girl.”

“Hahaha…… The whole body was beaten into bright red. Ah, this is Dukkha.”

“The stratagem tactic of Qi Men Dun Jia is to sense an enemy attack by their movement.

Without using your eyes, using only sense to feel the movement of keisaku, you will pass if you can do it. Hehehe.”

Dong!

Ah! That is my br-breast….. Don’t thrust in there. It hurts!

“Oh ho. The hand that clutches the breast has loosened . Hehehe, although Zenki doesn’t look over here, but the kid could see everything clearly.”

“Iyaaaaaa~!! My lord, please stop looking!”

“S-Sorry! Your breast is b-bigger than I imagined!”

“Please don’t explain it!”

“It’s bad. You are getting so far away from the spiritual state of nothingness.”

Zenki loosen the rope in his hand. Yoshiharu’s head drop into the well.

“Cough cough cough……”

"Eh, my lord? Did you just sink into the well?"

"A brat that could not resist looking at naked girls, this is youth, hehehe."

"Ha… Ha… My lord actually saw Shikanosuke in such an embarrassing state, this is Dukkha."

"Next strike!"

"Ah? Your mind has captured the movement of keisaku!"

WHACK!

"Ouch! Shikanosuke is such a bad child, so I was being punished like this. Ha…"

"Hey! You should be dodging the keisaku. Why did you go hit the keisaku on your own?"

"…… Cough cough! Hey! I finally got out from the well, why am I still seeing Shikanosuke naked? At least let her wear her shirt!"

"Sob…… I sense my lord is troubled... This is Dukkha"

After several training sessions, Yoshiharu and Shikanosuke were totally exhausted, so they decided to take a rest.

However, it was only a short time.

Wearing their shirt while panting heavily and, the both of them climbed up to a big tree trunk by supporting each other.

"…… Cough cough. It is already evening, can we really be able to catch up? Tomorrow is the day of war, but we're still unable to reach the spiritual state of nothingness."

"I can already feel that my lord is troubled."

"Ha... The matter of rescuing Hanbei and Kanbei is so urgent, yet my mind is still being distracted by a girl. How I wish a hammer can appear and hit my head fiercely."

"My lord wants to challenge the Dukkha too? If you don't mind, I have a Japanese sword with me!"

"Do you want to kill me?!"

Suddenly, a shadow appears in front of Yoshiharu.

“My lord! Big trouble!”

The identity of the shadow wasn’t Goemon, the one he ’s expecting, but the deputy minister of Kawanamishuu, Maeno Nanigashi.

And he was injured all over his body.

Yoshiharu guessed that something unexpected must have occurred at Yamato. “What happened?”

“Matsunaga Hisahide of Yamato has revolted!”

“What did you say?”

“This is the second time! Worst of all, her main camp is located at the Tamonyama Castle in front of Todai Temple’s Shosoin. The Armed priests and the Matsunaga army started a war there, we can’t get close to Shosoin at all!”

“G-Goemon is there right? Goemon somehow should have a way to solve this right?”

Maeno Nanigashi who was kneeling on the ground, roared while tears were dropping from his eyes.

"… Boss was… Boss was… Boss was defeated and killed.... AHHHHH!"

That demonic woman used the skill of puppet!

Boss was trying to stop her revolt, but has been killed!

We wanted to follow our boss and commit mass suicide, but in order to report this matter to our lord, my brothers yelled at me to come here.....

"It's no good! We are already…… BOSS!!!!!"

Maeno collapsed on the floor, and began to cry.

Shikanosuke cried out too "How could this happen… …"

At this moment, Yoshiharu himself did not even notice that he had stood up.

"…… Matsunaga Hisahide…… to think that you actually betrayed us again at this moment! Why? Why did you betray Nobuna? I will never forgive you!"

"Wait kid! Where do you think you are going?"

Granny Aga came down from the tree branch and used the keisaku to hit Yoshiharu's shoulder.

"To Yamato and get revenge for Goemon! Nobuna's still sleeping at Honnouji, she is still in a dangerous situation now!"

"Idiot!"

His forehead was hit.

Yoshiharu didn't sense the attack, so he couldn't dodge it.

His eyebrows are broken, and the blood sprays out.

"Ouch! What are you doing?!"

“Hehehe. Don't allow your heart to be shaken, you can ’t even dodge the keisaku in front of your eyes in such a situation! Idiot!”

“Ugh…”

“Didn’t you promised? For three days and three nights , no matter what happened, that you will not stop training.”

“… Ugh…”

"You won’t be able to master the art of invisibility this way."

“Damn…”

Yoshiharu took a few deep breathes.

Calm down.

If I was plagued by my anger, all the efforts till now will be in vain.

“Brat, are you giving up on saving Kanbei?”

“There is no way I will give up, but due to my greediness, all the forces have been scattered… And Goemon…”

“Idiot! What use is there for any regret now!?.”

“Baba. First was Hanbei, and then Goemon, have I been too dependent on them?”

“Do you think it is annoying for people that you are depending on them?”

“…… No.... Goemon.... She.... She is my partner. Partners who have entrusted their dreams and life to each other."

“If you are in the position, will you regret it now?”

“Of course not.”

“That lass called Oda Nobuna, is she the kind of person that can't surpass such a situation?”

“...No.... Nobuna isn't that weak of a person.”

“Hehehe. If that’s the case, I will stop here then.”

"… Yeah."

Maeno roared, "In place of the young, fair skin boss, the Kawanamishuu will definitely rescue the young, crybaby and fair skin's Hanbei! My lord, you must rescue that young, tsundere and watery skin's Kanbei!" Saying that, he leaps to the other side of the cypress tree.

It seems like they've already resolved themselves to steal the Ranjatai, even with the cost of their life.

Towards Maeno who is showing a dead face, Granny Aga said.

"Wait! That person called Goemon, is she really dead? "

"That…… No…… Er……"

"Where did the corpse go?"

"The boss's corpse…… It disappeared somewhere…"

"Stupid! Really stupid! If you didn't see the corpse, then don't decide whether she is dead!"

"Yeah! Boss might be injured and is now looking for a place to hide?"

"There is such a possibility too. Hehehe."

"Thank you so much, Baba. Ohhh! I suddenly feel much more energetic now!"

A spilt second later, Maeno's figure disappeared in the darkness.

The dead face he showed just now had vanished without a trace.

"Seriously, things like delusions and imagination, they are useful at a time like this. Those who are in the battlefield, still need an imagination called dream."

"That is hope."

"With this, the man won't start seeking death. Hehehe."

"Then all you said just now was a lie?"

“Shikanosuke, there's only a tiny difference between lies and truth, and there is no way humans like us can figure that out. What’s more, we are at Harima. Incidents happening in Yamato, how can someone like me without any clairvoyance know about them?”

Yoshiharu lowered his head and muttered “Spiritual state of nothingness, I think I understand it bit.” “The phrase that Nobuna always sing『Dreams are like delusions, I finally can understand. I finally know what she’s praying when she’s singing the Atsumori.”

“Brat, what will you do? Go to Yamato or continue to stay at Harima?”

Yoshiharu endured it, the impulse to go to Yamato to confirm the status of Goemon, and to rescue Nobuna who had collapsed from Hisahide's army.

Yoshiharu decided to take all the fruits and put it in the bag named "Sagara Yoshiharu".

Believe in the companions that hold the same dreams, overcoming the trials in front of them. This is the meaning of taking in all the fruits.

Believe in Goemon, believe in Nobuna.

Everything is not over yet.

The Incident at Honnouji has not been confirmed yet.

The Oda clan's retainers were scattered all over, the conditions of occurrence have seemingly been all fulfilled .

But the fated retainer, Akechi Juubei Mitsuhide has not betrayed Nobuna yet.

The Matsunaga army did not charge into Kyoto but fighting with the armed monks at Nara.

In this case, there is still time for Nobuna to react..

Even if Nobuna's army is small, but there is still time.

If it's Nobuna, she still has the determination of breaking through the impossible.

With this, we can definitely overcome all the difficulties.

So I want to defeat the enemy right in front of me too, with everything I have!

To endure, Yoshiharu cross his arms, with his nails digging deep into his skin, to the extent that blood can be seen flowing out.

“I'm staying at Harima! I must learn the art of invisibility before dawn!”

“My lord, I will try my best too!”

“Yeah. Everything will be decided tomorrow, Shikanosuke. Our friends are scattered all over. Now, the only ones who can rescue Kanbei is us.”

“Yes!”

“Hehehe.” Granny Aga laughed with happiness.

“The main army of the Mori clan is going to reach Harima in no time. Tomorrow is the only opportunity, can I really master the art of invisibility by tonight to rescue Kanbei?”

“Certainly. And I believe in Goemon. Shinobis have the ability to fake their death to escape. I had once been saved by Hanzo when he faked my death... So…”

I'm out of words...

It might just be a dream.

Perhaps it’s a delusion of hope instead. But...

This is not a dream that I should be having by myself. So.

“I believe that Goemon is still alive!”

Next morning.

In the west coast of Yumesakigara full of mist, the Sagara corps led by Yamanaka Shikanosuke appeared.

Shikanosuke took the lead and crossed the river.

“All forces! Forget about Mt.Shosan! Our target is to recapture the Kozuki Castle in West Harima !"

Wearing her Crescent Kazuno helmet, Yamanaka Shikanosuke had resolved to forsake her life here.

But this resolve isn't made from her desire to die.

This is the task force that will become the bait to lure out Ukita Naoie.

Trying her best to hold on the time to rescue Kuroda Kanbei, that's the determination of her resolve.

"If we successfully recaptured Kozuki Castle before the Mori army enters Harima, Ukita Naoie at Mt. Shozan will thus be cut off from his retreat path and be isolated. After that, we will defend Kozuki Castle and cut off both armies. So pace up!"

Shikanosuke leads the veterans of Amago's Ten Heroes, the veterans of Kanegasaki who joined Sagara corps, and though the numbers are small, the warriors of the Kuroda clan who have the mindset of "Rescue our princess" had also joined the force.

Kuroda family retainers' force, not more than hundred men, that joined to siege Miki castle, was deeply touched by Shikanosuke who is willing to rescue Kanbei to

challenge Ukita Naoie. They sent a team of elites to take part in the battle.

However, if Shikanosuke can't apply the techniques of Qi Men Dun Jia along with Granny Aga, it is still possible for them to be utterly defeated by Naoie who have a number advantage.

“Hehehe. A tactic formed at the last minute , will it succeed?”

Granny Aga that assists Shikanosuke was riding a cow and advancing lesiurely. “Won’t riding a cow be a problem?”

“The essence of my tactic is to watch the armies moving back and forth rapidly, but in actual fact , my army is stationary.”

The demonic star at the sky is shining.

Is that the star of Matsunaga Hisahide, the star of betrayal that is feared by the soldiers?

Shikanosuke is praying ,even though they couldn’t see the moon above their heads anymore, she is still praying.

"This is not for me, it is for my master, for Kuroda Kanbei-dono, please bless me with the Dukkha!"

Hearing what Shikanosuke said, the confusion of the armies disappears in an instant.

"Everyone, we must emerge victorious in this battle full of hardships. We will never give up!"

"Oh!" the armies cried.

"Breakthrough Mt.Shozan from the front, proceeding by pretending to retreat but advance in reality, pretending to advance but retreat in reality! Let's go!"

"Zenki, Shikanosuke had started to move."

"Certainly. Ukita Naoie is an intelligent person, he will soon notice that it was a decoy. Let's go now."

Sagara Yoshiharu, who was holding the map from Aga shrine's granny, started to move deep into Mt. Shozan.

There was only Yoshiharu and Zenki the both of them.

Although they had encountered Ukita army's scouts many times, with the art of invisibility, they were able to pass through with their lives intact.

Hiding while climbing the steep mountain road, climbing while hiding again. There is no time to rest up.

"Zenki, the scouts, they're here again!"

"Calm your mind down. Chant the mantra."

While hiding in the bushes, Yoshiharu and Zenki chant the mantra together.

The guards had almost ran right to the front of Yoshiharu.

"Was that my imagination?"

"It seems like there is no one there."

Shaking their heads, the guards went back the way they came from.

After the presence of the guards disappeared, Yoshiharu and Zenki resumed climbing.

"But it's really strange. Why didn't the guards see me? "

"No. just that you are thinking that you are hidden, that's all."

"I think?"

"Your belief will infect their minds. Of course, I am the one who started the infection."

"Is this an illusion? It's more like hypnosis."

"Although I'm much weaker now, I still have this degree of power."

The sight suddenly became clear, the rugged mountain road appeared in front.

While having a birds-eye view of Himeji Castle, Yoshiharu opened the map that he got from Granny Aga.

"There are a total of five possible places that have an underground prison. Kanbei should be moved out from the prison that Goemon discovered, there should be only four possible places left." Yoshiharu muttered.

Far away, the sound of screams and collision of weapons can be heard.

War had been ignited on the foothill.

Obviously, Ukita Naoie has sent the main bulk of his force into the battlefield. In order to capture Shikanosuke , even the number of scouts had decreased significantly.

“We don't have time to search them one by one. Zenki, we’ll split up.”

“No. The art of invisibility can’t be done without me. You will be found if we split up.”

“Then you could call out Sunekosuri to trace the smell of Kanbei. Hey, get up! It’s your show time!”

“Nyun…. I can't get up in the morning….?”

It seems that Sunekosuri that was possessing Yoshiharu still wants to sleep. It doesn’t want to come out at all.

“Too lazy! This concerns the life of your master!”

“Sagara Yoshiharu, quiet down.”

"Oh, yeah."

"Sagara Yoshiharu, let's head for the next location first. My power is weakening while we're talking."

"The effect of talisman started to wear off?"

"Correct. And of course, I will disappear too if my master dies."

"If you disappear now……"

"It will be the end then. I will go back to heaven."

Zenki seems to rarely talk about itself.

Although it's a Shikigami, apart from exposing its fox appearance occasionally, there's nothing different from a human.

And it's this Zenki, who had started to tell little by little when climbing the mountain.

"Before being summoned as a Shikigami by master, I was in a deep slumber, Sagara Yoshiharu."

"Deep slumber?"

"Away from all human contact, taking a short break. There was a time that I had once lived as a normal human being."

"As a human? Then you and Granny Aga are an old acquaintance long ago?"

"It's just that I had some bad blood with the ancestors of Granny Aga."

"Ancestors? The Onmyouji of Ashiya Douman or something like that? Seems like a really old story."

"After all, Granny Aga is Doman's sixtieth generation."

Zenki looked up at the endless sky above him.

"Before I went to slumber, I decided to not be bothered about the human world. Tangible objects will break one day. Even if you want to protect something, there is no reason to do so till the end. If you protect it, you will only impede the would be change and growth of that person. This is not only applying to people, but to a country as well."

“Don’t talk about something so complicated. I don't understand it.”

Zenki is trying to express something, but Yoshiharu can’t take it in.

He is just not the kind of man who will talk about old stories at times like this.

“When I was first summoned as Shikigami by my master, to her who had woken me up arbitrarily and commanded me, I revealed the evil side of myself.”

“That should be before Hanbei met Nobuna and me right? What did Hanbei want to do before she summoned you?”

“She told me that she wants to become a military strategist to train the ruler of men, and ending the chaotic era. The more interesting thing is she wants to change this human world into a world that’s filled with empathy , wipe the country of all resentment and grudge and let the world of darkness come to an end. That’s why, she need my power.”

"In term of modern language, it is to end the Middle Ages."

"It means Onmyoudou will be totally useless. I thought she was a strange Onmyouji then."

"And so you became a Shikigami of Hanbei?"

"No, Master's body was already sickly by then, cutting off the dragon veins means shortening her own life. I feel that her weak body and delicate mind won't allow her to chase her ambition. So I told her to just be thankful that she is still alive, live peacefully for the rest of her life and to abandon her ambition and leave it alone. I told her the truth."

Zenki's voice stops suddenly.

"So, Hanbei……"

"She didn't even shed a tear, like she had seen through everything in a short moment, she muttered to herself, only revealing a very troubled smile. Master knew she didn't have much time left, and due to her introvert character, she knows that it will be very hard for her to find a lord she can serve. And so, she summoned a

dangerous Shikigami like me, it must be Master's last gamble."

"……Is that so?"

"When master was going to give up, when even her own aspirations and ideals has almost been forgotten and when she live a peaceful life, she was forced to serve Mino's Saito Yoshitatsu in order to repay Ando Mamoru Iga who brought her up. But……"

"But……?"

"But Master met a person whom she can entrust her ambition, and that person is you, Sagara Yoshiharu."

"……"

"Master said you are unafraid of death and continues to forge ahead, it was much more meaningful than being alive but unable to do anything. Compared to that determined expression she had on and the time I first met her, she seem to have totally changed to a different person.

"Hanbei made such a big gamble on me……"

"At that moment, I seem to finally remember the feelings I had as a human being but long forgotten."

"……"

"You are the necessary man needed for Oda Nobuna to open up a new era. The princess of the Oda Clan needs you too. After I overheard the conversation at Honnouji, I am very certain of this too."

"Is that so……"

Zenki's faint smile suddenly disappears.

"Sagara Yoshiharu, I am telling you this before it is too late. If we both fall into the jaws of death, you must immediately abandon me to make sure you survive ."

"What? I can't do such a thing."

"You must. I will disappear sooner or later, but this country's future needs you. You must understand the meaning of my master gambling her life on you, Sagara Yoshiharu."

"… Hanbei…… Huh…"

Sunekosuri suddenly show her head from the back of Yoshiharu.

“Sob sob, this is really a touching story.”

“Sunekosuri, you should tell me that you are awake!”

“Uhh.... Uhh...…… I'm Crying, the whole Japan is crying, nuuu.”

“Cut the crap out and start to work. My pocket isn't a warmer.”

“I wanna rest somemore, nuuu.”

“Start working! If not, I am going to put a stick through your ass and BBQ you at the fire.”

“Buru buruburu. Ah! Found the smell of Kanbei♪”

“Really?”

“Really, nuuu!”

The direction that Sunekosuri pointed is a steep rolling downhill.

The view is bad as the trees grow thick on both side of the road.

“Zenki, although it looks dangerous, according to the map, it should have three possible places at that direction .”

“Then let’s go.”

“Yeah.”

“If we're right, the guards will increase. Once then, we will be using the art of invisibility to erase our presence.”

“Invisibility while moving?”

“I will help you, let’s go.”

Yoshiharu chanted the mantra and moved down the hill.

They encountered several guards during their way.

(I’m not here, I’m not here, I am just an illusion)

Because he chants the mantra strongly, and with the help of Zenki, they went through all the guards one by one.

There is still plenty of power left for Zenki, but Yoshiharu was nearly at his limit.

Once his heart becomes shaken, the spell will be broken.

Do not be impatient, do not be angry, don’t be anxious .

I must concentrate to retain the spiritual state of nothingness, otherwise the spell will be broken.

After passing through a corner,

Yoshiharu muttered “we’ve gone through half, we're almost there.” And while he’s moving forward.

Bang!

A bullet flew right at the head of Yoshiharu.

“Although I can't see them, there is someone there!”

It is Ukita Naoie.

The one who was supposed to be at the battlefield, Ukita Naoie.

It is shot from another side of the corner, a total blind spot that Yoshiharu, with his guard down couldn't dodge it.

Yoshiharu was shocked by the instinct and sense of smell of Ukita Naoie, who shot on something that he couldn't see.

Just a bit more.....

It might be because of his state of mind now, with his heart shaken, he might had not totally erase his presence.

No matter what –

"I will not be fooled by this degree of bait, the one who is battling Shikanosuke on the battlefield is my substitute !"

Facing Ukita Naoie who had ambushed them, there is no way that ordinary people like Yoshiharu can avoid it.

No matter how good he is at dodge ball, there is no way that it's faster than a bullet. What's more, it's a snipe from a total blind spot.

Are we going to fail already?

Is it impossible to achieve the dream of putting all the fruits in a bag.

Am I going to die here with the ambition inherited from Hanbei?

However...

"Sagara Yoshiharu! Go!"

There is a person that moves faster than bullet exists.

It is Zenki.

Zenki move in a wind-like speed and stand in front of Yoshiharu, and the bullet hit its right shoulder.

Zenki broke the art of invisibility and shown itself.

"Zen…… Zenki! You……"

"You're still not yet been seen by people. Go now! Run to where Kanbei is! Rescue Kanbei!"

"Didn't you told me that you are afraid of Tanegashima's bullets…… Won't you disappear?"

"Quit nagging if you are a man!"

"If you disappear now, you can't come back anymore!"

"Shut up and go!"

The eyes of Zenki told Yoshiharu that this is the final farewell.

"… Ohhhh!"

Yoshiharu charges forward.

Towards Ukita Naoie and hitting him with his head.

"Wah!"

This is the invisible Yoshiharu's header.

Ukita Naoie fell down head-first, letting go of his handgun that he was holding.

At the same time, the art of invisibility that had covered Yoshiharu broke.

Looking at Yoshiharu who had suddenly came out of nowhere and riding on his body, Ukita Naoie shouted out in surprise “You……! Where did you come from!”

“You idiot! Why are you still here! Go and rescue Kanbei now!”

The right arm of Zenki had already disappeared.

“Shut up! I will beat this guy up first before rescuing Kanbei together, Zenki.”

“How stupid can you be?!”

“Ah, I am just this stupid, okay!”

“Now that Omyoudou is slowly vanishing, I will disappear no matter what!”

“Yet you haven’t disappeared now! Aren’t you still alive?!”

“You are really……”

Yoshiharu continued raining a barrage of punches on Naoie’s face.

But his punches didn’t hit.

Yoshiharu was kicked at the stomach, and he was pushed away. His waist heavily hit the tree trunk on his side. It’s so painful that he can’t stand.

Ukita Naoie was roaring and standing up.

“Wanna win against me bare-handed! You are too naive, kid!”

“Cough, cough……”

The cornered Ukita Naoie is like a wounded lion.

With a resolve to fight until the end, he powerfully kicked on Yoshiharu’s face, which have fallen to the ground.

In the nick of time, Zenki used its only hand to pull Yoshiharu's body up.

“Cough, cough…… I thought I would be able to win without firearms…… Didn’t expect him to be this good bare-handed……”

“Sagara Yoshiharu, run!”

“My gun, where is my gun damn it!”

Zenki and Yoshiharu rushed down the hill.

Ukita Naoie who lost his handgun didn’t chase them and the distance between two of them and Ukita Naoie became farther.

But their destination is obvious, the underground prison that confined Kuroda Kanbei.

“I won’t let you escape!” Ukita Naoie finally found his gun.

Bang! Bang!

Their backs are aimed and opened fire.

Yoshiharu's whole body can feel the killing intent of the bullet.

All of his hair stood up.

They're almost reaching the underground prison that held Kanbei.

It is just a little more……

“Seems like this is the end, Sagara Yoshiharu, farewell.”

All of the sudden, Zenki threw Yoshiharu's body towards the front and kicked him.

Looking back, he had started a confrontation with Ukita Naoie who had cut off the branches with a sword while chasing them.

Zenki’s chest was shot by two bullets.

“.....Uhh……”

Shikigamis are very afraid of bullets.

They are more vulnerable to bullets than humans.

Zenki’s chest starts to melt.

"You deserve it! One person down. Sagara Yoshiharu, you are going to die here too!"

Saying that, Ukita Naoie was however blocked by an invisible wall.

Zenki released all of its remaining energy.

Wanting to settle things once and for all……

"Ukita Naoie, I won't let you kill this man. You will have to kill me if you want to advance." Its body starts to crumble like sand.

Even so, Zenki still moves forward.

Using all of its power on every step to move towards Ukita Naoie, whose expression was distorted by terror as he was shouting "You… You monster!".

The distance between Yoshiharu start to become bigger.

"Sagara Yoshiharu. The confused Ukita Naoie won't have a way to deal with you now. Leave him to me. Don' t think about other things, just hurry up and rescue Kuroda Kanbei!"

"…… Zenki…… Are you really intending to disappear here……!"

"Sagara Yoshiharu, you really are a total idiot. I can't believe that I will be moved by a foolish man like you……"

"Wait! Wait……"

"I can't believe that I could still cry. I thank you from my heart."

"No! Don't disappear!"

"I said already, stop your nonsense! Grow up! This is a parting with a friend! Endure it!"

Zenki's words changed Yoshiharu's expression instantly.

"You're willing to recognize me as a friend..... Zenki."

"This is really an annoying topic. Don't tell anyone. Farewell, my friend."

"……!"

Yoshiharu clenched his teeth, turned around and started to run.

He ran to the underground dungeon that imprisons Kuroda Kanbei, alone.

He doesn't want to let Zenki saw his tears so he didn't let out any voice.

If I let out any voice, Zenki will know that I am crying.

He will definitely scold me that for not growing up yet .

So, I ran without letting out any voice.

With a devil-like expression, Ukita Naoie uses the bullet to blast away Zenki's presence, while approaching Zenki and shouted "How can I let you get away!"

Using this weapon from Nanban, they are able to disperse this country's magical power which had existed since ancient time.

"The Onmyouji era had already ended. Now the people are creating a new era, with me…… That's good."

Zenki closes its eyes.

The only regret he has is he’s unable to defeat the spirit that appeared at Kyoto.

But that ghost will soon be sent back into the darkness by the leaders of this new era, such as Oda Nobuna.

And that will not be far away.

Finally, the time is about to change.

The chaotic country which had stagnated for a century is about to be reborn.

The people who used the spiritual powers of the fox deity, called it Onmyoudou and trapped this country for years...

The people who had protected the country but due to their overwhelming strength, had also delayed it's progress...

With the ancestor of the Tsuchimikado clan returning back to heaven....

I had never expected that the final moments turned out to be a longing filled with hope…… I really hate to part with this world, Zenki thought.

“Sagara Yoshiharu. Bring my master into the new world.”

A sound of a gun fire can be heard from Mt. Shosan’s mountainside.

“Argh……”

Yoshiharu didn’t look back.

Running at a narrow downhill road that appears on the bamboo forest.

I had promised to keep all the fruits to myself..... I did promised...

But, my strength isn't enough.

Yoshiharu didn’t stop.

I can’t let Zenki’s sacrifice be in vain.

The moment to be sad can be leave till after I save Kanbei and leave Mt Shozan.

Only a small distance left between Kanbei.

“Sunekosuri, is this path correct? Is there the scent of Kanbei?”

Sunekosuri’s head came out from his bosom.

Both its ears and eyes are drooping.

“It is correct ~nuu……”

“Hey, come on, you are going to meet your master, cheer up!”

“Zenki already returned to heaven yet Yoshiharu still have this spirit ~nuu……”

“Of course! It is not the time to depressed!”

“Ah. Why is it raining on a sunny day, and it’s a storm ~nuu."

“It... It's a sun shower! A fox must be getting married somewhere."

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“…… What, it turn out be monkey’s tears.”

“Shut up!” Yoshiharu shouted.

“And there's snot too!”

“Wait, don’t incite me anymore! …… Ah?”

At the end of the bamboo forest was a never seen before scenery.

“How could…… the road split into three?”

“...nuu.”

“The map that Granny Aga gave me shows only one direct road to the dungeon!”

There’s no time to hesitate, but they must choose the correct way before moving off.

“W…… Wh…… What now-nuuu!”

“Sunekosuri, which road has Kanbei's scent? You should know that.”

“Let me smell…… Ah, I found it!”

“Where!?”

“All three roads have the smell of Kanbei.”

“What! Now is not the time to joke around! Or else I'm roasting you!”

“Don’t roast me! It's true- nuu.”

“So, this is a trap that Ukita Naoie planned, huh?”

A death trap might await if the wrong path is chosen.

Even if there isn't any trap, I could still be lost in the mountain.

I can't use the art of invisibility without Zenki.

“Which one is the correct path, Kanbei? Where the hell are you Kanbei!?”

A cold voice suddenly rang out by Yoshiharu's ears.

“...That bad habit of you can’t be corrected, calm your mind down.”

"Zenki?"

"Turn to the right path, there will be someone waiting for you by the pond."

This somehow ironic voice is without a doubt, Zenki voice.

This is not any illusion, till the very end, you are still leading me.

Then there is nothing to hesitate anymore.

"To the right side!"

Yoshiharu runs toward the right path with full speed.

He rushes through the bamboo path.

The vision suddenly becomes wide, leaving the bamboo forest, there was a pond.

Two girls are waiting for Yoshiharu.

One of them is wearing a bright colored kosode, a little Japanese girl.

Another one of them have a pair of azure eyes, previously acting as Ukita Naoie's messenger and visited Yoshiharu, a well-mannered princess knight.

Both of them have horses by their side.

"You guys are?!"

"Nice to meet you, Sagara Yoshiharu-sama. I am Ukita Naoie's daughter, Ukita Hideie."

"I am Hideie-sama's aide, Konishi Yakurou from Sakai . This is the second time we meet."

"Yakurou, Yakurou, when Otou-sama saw through Sagara Corp's feint and suddenly wanted to increase the road, I was really worrying about it.

"Because I did put a candy at the right side of the road as a mark."

"Yeah, as expected of Yakurou, you are really intelligent, hehe."

Yoshiharu stopped and shook his hand.

"No nono, I didn't see any candy at all."

“Wh… What did you say? Where is the candy I put?”

“Most likely eaten by a bird?”

“Ah! That’s bad!”

“Then… How did Yoshiharu-sama knew which one is the correct path?”

“I don’t want another fox's wedding again, so please, it ’s better if you don’t ask……”

Hideie and Yakurou look at each other with an unbelievable expression.

“Why are you guys here?”

“You are coming here to rescue Kanbei-sama, right? This is the key of the underground prison.”

Hideie took out a golden key from her breast and put it on Yoshiharu’s hand.

“Ukita Naoie is still chasing me from the back, I will tell you the reason on the way to the underground jail that imprisoned Kanbei.

Yoshiharu jump up to the horse, shouted “I'm relying on you" and moved off.

Yakurou rode on another horse, while Hideie cling to her tightly.

“We had heard about Yoshiharu-sama from Kanbei-sama, she said that you are a kind-hearted person that hate killing.”

“We master and servant are both Christians and are friends with Simon-sama.”

“Yoshiharu-sama, I want you to rescue Kanbei-sama and with it, rescue my father as a result too.”

“Ukita Naoie? It's hard for me to say it out, but I really want to……”

“We don’t need you to believe, but Otou-sama has a human heart too.”

Hideie’s little hands are holding a silver cross while tears are coming out from her eyes.

She appears to be a kind-hearted innocent girl.

It's hard to imagine she is that Ukita Naoie's child.

But, it is true that the face of hers and the big eyes has some resemblance with Naoie.

"Although Otou-sama was known to be infinitely wicked, the people he killed are only limited to men. And to women, even after he had finished using them, he will not finish them off. As for children, he will never hurt them at all. He has this side of him that nobody knows……"

"But now, he imprisons Kanbei and wants to execute her."

"This is because if he didn't catch Shikanosuke before Mori armies' arrival, then he will need to give away Bizen and Mimasaka."

"To let me inherit Bizen and Mimasaka's 500K yield of land which Otou-sama spend his life to acquire, he was going to lose his last remaining humanity……"

"If he breaks even the taboo of not killing any women, my lord will really become a total demon."

“Many times, Hideie tried to force him by threatening suicide, but a Christian is prohibited from committing suicide… Sob sob……”

Behind Ukita Naoie’s countless sins, pain was felt deep in her daughter Hideie's heart.

Can't the act of her own daughter joining Christianity stop Naoie?

No, someone who was able to raise such a good, innocent daughter, is definitely not a demon, Ukita Naoie must be a good father.

Hey, Sagara Yoshiharu, you must not be controlled by anger and turned into a demon too. Zenki whispered by his ears.

Cut off all the cycle of resentment here.

This is probably what it means by ending the era of warring states.

Felt like it would be admonished.

“Was Kanbei being tortured? Is she alright?”

"Yes. Otou-sama did threaten her several times but didn't torture her. Though the movement of her body was limited, but other than that she is safe."

"Her muscles might have atrophied, she should be alright after a hot spring bath."

"Really…?"

Looks like I haven't lose yet, Yoshiharu thought.

If Kanbei had been tortured and her whole body filled with wounds, I will surely ignite the flame of anger and revenge and become a demon myself, but I can still retain my sanity as a human.

Yoshiharu reached the cave entrance while looking at the sky.

"I know, I will never let Kanbei get killed."

"Thank you very much……"

"You must walk from here onward. The prison is at the end of the dungeon."

Jumping down from the horse, Yakurou led Hideie and Yoshiharu into the dungeon. At the cost of sacrificing Zenki, Yoshiharu had finally arrived.

At the other side of the iron bar, Kuroda Kanbei is waiting for him.

“Ah, how slow, Sagara Yoshiharu.”

Although she lost some weight, but Kanbei’s smile was still the same as her normal smile.

Yoshiharu feverishly opened the lock with the key and opened the door.

The feelings that had been suppressed exploded.

Sunekosuri who showed its head from Yoshiharu’s chest shouted “It’s raining heavily nyun!” But he really can’t hold back anymore.

“Kanbeiii!”

He has no idea what he’s talking about.

“Don’t leave me without me knowing you idiot!”

"…… I'm not an idiot, I'm a maiden!"

"Shut up! It's still too early to declare yourself as a maiden! You little brat!"

"Is Takenaka Hanbei alright?"

"I won't let Hanbei die! You now should worry about your own life. Worry about Shojyumaru."

"Shojyumaru was safe, I believe in my companions."

"You……"

Yoshiharu was crying aloud while embracing the small Kanbei with all his power.

What's with the world genius?

Kanbei. You are, really stupid. An incurable idiot. Conceitedly coming to Ukita Naoie's place, there's a limit to being nice. Making me put in so much effort and making others worry about you so much. As a strategist, please think a bit before you act. Idiot idiot idiot!

"Yoshiharu, let go of me. It hurts."

"Shut up! If I let you go then you will disappear again! I won't let you go anymore!"

"…… I won't go, again. I won't disappear like that again."

"Then promise me!"

"I won't go…… I won't leave without saying another word again."

"If you still act as you wish next time, I definitely won't forgive you!"

Sunekosuri jumped into Kanbei's bosom.

"This is still the comforting place after all."

The act of Sunekosuri hiding itself in Kanbei's bosom became a trigger.

"Wu……"

Embraced tightly by Yoshiharu, Kanbei began to cry loudly.

As if all the tension was release, an unstoppable sobbing occurred.

“Uwaaaa…… Uwaaaaa!”

A non stop sob.

What's left of the remaining moisture in her weakened body turned into tears and flowed out.

Infected by them, Hideie and Yakurou who was standing at the side shed tears too.

In order not to disturb the reunion of Yoshiharu and Kanbei, they stifled their sound.

“Uwaaaaa! I’m really scared… It's really painful…… Yoshiharu… Yoshiharu!”

“Just cry it out! A child should act like a child and cry all you want!”

Yoshiharu’s voice was mixed with tears, and was unable to hold back his emotion.

What was Kanbei's mentality when she came to this mountain alone?

Why did she chose such a cruel fate even when she had drawn the「Foolcard with your tarot?

When she heard that Nobuna had ordered me to kill her own sister from Ukita Naoie, what was Kanbei thinking at that time? How can she endure this?

She didn't mention a thing about her sister Shojyumaru, which means that she already treats and believes me as her companion.

In such a musty and narrow underground prison, she still believes in me, believing that I won't betray her.

There are still many gentle stuff I want to say to her....

But too many thoughts flooded in my mind, making me unable to figure out how to express it.

"…… You are still alive. Thank you."

Finally, I forced this line out with all my strength.

Kanbei buried her face into Yoshiharu's chest, sobbing softly.

Hideie and Yakurou remind Yoshiharu.

"Yoshiharu-sama, it will be troublesome if Otou-sama found this out."

"Go down the mountain. We will guide you through a secret passage with no scouts."

Yoshiharu and Kanbei are now deep inside that enemy camp alone.

And Ukita Naoie is approaching.

"Yeah. I will leave the showdown with Ukita Naoie after I bring Kanbei back to safety.

The Mori army will also arrive at Harima by tomorrow or the day afterward.

Although he was wise enough to see that Shikanosuke was acting as bait, but because of paying too much attention on this, Ukita Naoie forgot his original objective – to capture Shikanosuke.

Without him on the battlefield, there should be no way that Shikanosuke will be captured.

The cornered Ukita Naoie should be unable to make the right choice already.

"Let's go, we're leaving Mt. Shozan."

Yoshiharu is stroking Kanbei's head and stood up.

Kanbei who had been imprison in this narrow dungeon for so long, her leg muscle should already got limped and unable to move.

It also consumes her stamina a lot.

Maybe because she was tired due to crying, Kanbei was asleep at Yoshiharu's shoulder.

Yoshiharu carried Kanbei on his back and walked towards the exit.

They mounted a horse and ready to leave.

Hideie and Yakurou also mounted a horse and led Yoshiharu.

"Yoshiharu-sama, someday please help Otou-sama……"

"Ah, I'm in debt towards you, so I sure will!"

The four people, riding their two horses were walking down the mountain at the secret passage.

However,

“Hideie-sama! It’s the lord! The lord had caught up!”

“Huh?”

“What?!”

At the end of the passage, there is a man waiting for Yoshiharu.

It’s Ukita Naoie.

“You bastard! How dare you trick my daughter!”

His eyes were filled with rage and madness.

“Otou-sama, it’s not like this! Yoshiharu-sama……”

“My lord, please be rational!”

“Sagara Yoshiharu! You dare to trick my daughter, I will never forgive you!”

He fired the gun all of a sudden.

But it's lucky that there's still quite a distance between the two of them.

Naoie had lose his calm, causing his accuracy to drop.

Yoshiharu seized the rein tightly, and barely dodged the shot.

“Hideie is my flesh and blood daughter! I spent my whole life to get Bizen and Mimasaka’s 500K yield, they all belong to Hideie! I won’t let Mori or Oda take it all away!”

Riding a horse, the furious Ukita Naoie charged over, ready to close up the distance to give Yoshiharu a final critical hit.

Yoshiharu didn't retreat a single step, why?

The difference level when they're both bare-handed was so obvious.

But I'm confident. I will never lose to this man again.

It was from that time when I carried Kanbei at my back.

“Ukita Naoie! You are the one who imprisoned Kanbei in the first place, right!?" “Don’t pretend to understand me, you little brat!”

“Didn’t you have a rule that you won’t kill a girl?! Do you really plan to degrade yourself into a samurai who will kill even a girl?!”

“If it’s for Hideie, this is nothing!”

“Your daughter does not want you to turn into a demon because of such a thing you know!”

“Ukita Clan’s family matters are none of your business , you little brat! What do you know about our family?!”

“I do not know anything! Look at how old you are, don't go all chuuni with the way you're talking!”

“If the Ukita clan isn't inherited by Hideie, my life… no, my mother’s life would be totally meaningless!”

"Mother?"

“My lord is totally confused because Hideie was being taken away.” Yakurou said. Then, Hideie who was

clinging to Yakurou, suddenly jumped from her horse and onto Yoshiharu's leg.

"Otou-sama, Hideie does not wish for Otou-sama to become a demon. Allow me to be killed by Yoshiharu-sama here!"

Hideie was serious. Even Yoshiharu understands that Hideie wasn't acting.

Because of her pure nature, Hideie entrusted her life, which was most valued by the Ukita Clan to Yoshiharu.

"If the fact that I Hideie disappearing is able to save Otou-sama, then……"

"Hideie, wait! Sagara Yoshiharu! YOU BASTARD!!!"

"Yoshiharu-sama, I am very sorry. Christians are prohibited from committing suicide. So please cut Hideie 's throat."

"Yoshiharu-sama! No!"

Yakurou tried to stop Yoshiharu.

Yoshiharu pulled out a knife slowly and quietly.

Then he put the knife to Hideie's pure white throat.

"I know, Hideie. In order to remove the demon in Ukita Naoie, it seems that I have to shoulder the burden of having the demon instead."

"Yoshiharu-sama…… Thank you very much……"

"This is to repay my debt to you who saved Kanbei. Farewell, Hideie."

"Yoshiharu-sama? What are you doing?! This is not something you can afford to do even if you are rich!"

"Yakurou! Take my soul as compensation."

"Wait, Sagara Yoshiharu! I'll give Kanbei back to you! I'll let the both of you leave this mountain! Please stop! Please stop! Only her…… No!"

"It's too late, Ukita Naoie. You are the one who cornered your daughter to this point."

Yoshiharu made a slashing movement, and blood immediately gushed out everywhere.

Just a little more but still unable to……

Unable to reach Hideie.

Like a soul that was out its shell, Ukita Naoie's fell lifeless from the horse.

His eyes had lost all it's radiance, and his surroundings started to blur.

He saw the figure of his dead mother.

“Oka-sama……”

The Ukita Clan was serving the daimyo of Bizen.

Naoie’s grandfather was famous due to his loyalty to his lord.

Naoie’s father was very capable and a good strategist, his mother was also even been called as Bizen’s beauty.

His parents’ relation were very good, the young Naoie grew up in a loving and caring surrounding that included his grandfather and parents.

But for the Ukita Clan to be defeated, it was not a defeat by the enemy’s strength, but it was the betrayal of their colleagues that have the same lord.

His grandfather was deceived by his colleagues and was eventually killed.

This insidious strategy was all done just to take the seat of chief retainer.

The lord had also abandoned the loyal Ukita Clan.

The Ukita Clan then lost their home and scattered away.

Fearing of being assassinated, his wandering father can only feign insanity.

Even so his father couldn't be saved.

During the time of wandering, he died before rebuilding his family.

Naoie always believed that this was the doing of those traitors that killed his grandfather and had want to exterminate his whole family.

Having to leave his home at a young age, Naoie was treated as a taboo or a plague due to his case.

The retainers that were willing to follow him were also few.

Samurais that had lost their territory will be in a such pathetic state.

Even the land to farm was also gone.

And finally the retainers degenerated into bandits to snatch for food.

Already deprived of the reason to return to the samurai world that's intertwined with betrayal and conspiracies.

Already deciding to give up on the Ukita Clan's revival, and live a carefree life.

If I really need to become the bad guy, it's better to become a bandit than being starved to death.

But seeing the falling son, Naoie's mother decided to issue a petition to the lord, hoping to rebuild the Ukita Clan.

The lord replied.

"Be my concubine, and I will give Naoie some land."

Despicable and full of greed.

Naoie who had even her beautiful mother taken away was furious

The actions of his lord towards the always loyal Ukita clan infuriates him. He cursed the world of samurai and went berserk.

With the resolve to die together with his mother, Naoie led his companions, a bunch of bandits to burst into the lord's mansion, but without any traces of sadness, Naoie' s mother even greeted his son with a gentle smile.

"Why, Oka-sama! Why!"

With a gentle but beautiful smile, his mother soothed Naoie's rage.

"It's all for you Naoie-sama……"

Even now, Naoie cannot forget her mother's smile at that time.

Knowing that he was being loved by his mother.

So.

“At that time, I vowed!”

I must kill all the betrayers of Ukita Clan, the lord will also be destroyed by me! No matter how wicked the strategy may be, no matter how others insult me, I will definitely kill all of them!

Even if I have only my last breath, I must get my mother back.

So he killed the samurais.

To increase the Ukita Clan’s territory, to become more powerful, he showed no mercy to those samurais.

First, he murdered his wife's father.

Initially, it was to celebrate for the snatched land.

The Ukita Clan will surely revive!

This is Mother’s long-cherished wish.

His second wife’s father was also killed by him.

By using various treacherous and sinister methods, he killed all his hateful enemies one by one.

Gifting his blood-related sister away as a wife, then killing the man when he let down his guard.

This method was repeated countless times.

Everyone believed that “I didn't do anything wrong, so I won't be betrayed, right?.” So no matter how many companions Ukita Naoie killed, everyone still believed him.

“The one who believes is an idiot!” Naoie laughed out loud in front of those killed companions.

However, he spared women and children.

Even if he wanted to, he will recalled his mother's smile during that time and become unable to do it.

Somehow, at some moment of time, when plotting any strategies and assassination, Naoie had decided “kill all men, and only take advantage of the women.”

(Why? Because I believe they will love me, those girls that become pawns in my strategies will say this to me while smiling.)

“It’s all because of you Naoie-sama…”

No matter what kind of women, even if they are bad, the expression they had while smiling and saying that is just like Bodhisattva.

It’s the same like Mother.

The bright smile might just be the reason of Naoie's life ...

The resentment and tragic expression on his wives and sister-in-law after Naoie betrayed them were also filled with their love to their family.

However, after countless times of betrayal and assassination, when Naoie destroyed the lord to rescue his mother, his mother was no longer in this world.

Just when he had committed such heinous sins and will soon have his wish fulfilled...

The rest of Naoie's life was just so magnificently useless.

(Even so)

"It's all because of you Naoie-sama."

As long as women say this to me with a smiling expression, I won't be able to leave this spiral of murder and betrayal.

(Humans are really hard to understand.)

The more I betrayed, the more I have been called demon, the more women surrounded me. Every time when I finished using one of them, there will be more waiting.

Smiling and saying "It's all because of you Naoie-sama ."

It's only then that I believe that I wasn't abandoned by Oka-sama and had always been loved.

I can't get out from this already.

I can only be a wicked demon for my whole life, until the day I die.

Until the day my daughter, Hideie was born.

“Since I had always slept with women for my ambitions, and not having any descendant, I had always believe that Ukita Clan will end with me.”

Yet, Hideie was born.

“…… I didn't expect that I will have a descendant at my age, a daughter, Hideie.”

My mother sacrificed herself for me.

Someone evil like Ukita Naoie is okay even if he was assassinated out on the streets. Those were already been discarded along with his humanity.

But my daughter, no, Hideie who inherited the blood of my mother, I want her to inherit the Ukita Clan.

“I must let her inherit the Ukita Clan, those 500K yields are all hers……!”

Ukita Naoie lays face down on the floor as he crawls to Hideie.

“If not…… For what reason did my mother…… For what reason did she live…… And for what did she died for!”

Naoie shouts from the bottom of his heart, with all his might.

“The women that loved me are happy to be used by me. It must be. It must be like this!”

Hideie lays on the ground and didn't move an inch.

Naoie’s dizziness wouldn’t stop, he couldn't even stand up.

He was screaming continually, not stopping even to catch his breath.

Perhaps it was too much of a shock that he couldn't catch up the breathing.

He was unable to move forward anymore.

“Hideie…… Hideie…… answer me……”

Is this retribution?

Is this because I abandoned my only daughter?

Is this because I brought her up too innocent?

I kept what's left of my humanity all for Hideie.

But now, I had drove my daughter to death.

In the end, all I did was to betray and hurt those women who loved me?

A thing like letting the women around me live on, can't I do that at all?

Since my mother was taken away by the lord, I have lost my mother forever. Should I have scream out in agony then?

“Sagara Yoshiharu, this is my defeat……”

Sagara Yoshiharu picks up Hideie’s corpse in silence.

His hand was covered with blood.

Yakurou was clutching a cross, performing a Christian prayer.

“Please! I give you my life! I hand Bizen and Mimasaka over to you!”

“…… Is that true, Ukita Naoie?”

“It’s true! So please, use the power of the future to resurrect Hideie…….!”

“Fine.”

Yoshiharu pokes Hideie’s face.

Hideie suddenly opened her big eyes and stared at Naoie.

“…… Otou-sama I’m sorry…… If I didn’t do this, Otou-sama won’t listen to my words, so I lied to you……”

“Hideie?!”

“I made a deal with Yoshiharu-sama, and we acted this out. What Yoshiharu-sama cut is his own hand.”

“It was too deep, and it hurts like hell now! Hideie-chan, please treat my hand.”

“Yes.”

“For a moment I don’t know what’s happening, but it was good my lord! But do you intend to give all Bizen and Mimasaka to Yoshiharu-sama?”

At least you should at least leave about ten percent or so, Yakurou thought in her head.

Naoie felt like yelling at her as she is still holding a cross in her hand.

The strength in his body was slowly recovered.

Naoie suddenly stood up and snatched Hideie from Yoshiharu’s hand.

“Idiot! How could I give it to him!”

“You bastard, Hideie worked so hard to act and you didn't change at all!”

“Give me a break! I was tricked so badly by you and you're still spouting nonsense!? If you want it, take it from me in a fair fight!”

“You didn't fight any war, only relying on assassinations to seize new territories, who are you to say that to me!”

“Shut up kid! Won't a war kill many of your retainers? Isn't the most efficient way to kill the enemy's boss?"

“Besides, you know the reason why are you doing bad things and yet you can’t stop yourself? Why is that!?”

“Hmmpf! If I change myself now, those women that has been used by me will not be happy doesn't it!”

“Who cares about that shit! Look at all this blood pouring out from my hand, it hurts like hell!"

“Didn't you did that to yourself?!”

“Shut up! For starters, this is for Zenki!”

Yoshiharu raise the arm that is not injured, and gave a roundhouse punch right at Naoie's face.

Because Naoie was holding Hideie with both his hands, he couldn’t defend himself at all, and was hit in the face with blood spewing out from his nose.

“You deserve it!”

“You…… Despicable, Sagara Yoshiharu!”

“Ukita Naoie, you cannot win against me anymore!”

“Shut up! Sagara Yoshiharu, how dare you humiliate me! I will definitely kill you!”

“I’m not afraid of you anymore! Even though you are the one who killed Zenki, but I will let you go because of Hideie and Yakurou!”

“What did you say? Don’t get too cocky, you brat!”

“Next time we will settle this on the battlefield, Ukita Naoie.”

While carrying Kanbei on his back, Yoshiharu rode the horse and leaved the place quickly.

Naoie wanted to aim at Yoshiharu "Damn, with Kanbei blocking, I can't shoot at all."

He gave up on it.

Because Hideie, who was in his arms, glared at Naoie.

“In actual fact he could have killed Hideie. That person is Hideie’s life saver.”

“That’s right, my lord.”

“…… Che, can't help it then.”

Finally, Yoshiharu escaped from Mt. Shosan by carrying Kanbei.

Naoie can only smack his own lips, and feel that one of his teeth is broken.

“…… I shouldn't have had a child after all.”

“So what now, my lord? Become allies with Yoshiharu-sama?”

“Yakurou, do some calculations. His army is limited, the winner will be decided when the Mori Army arrived, isn't it?”

“It is still not decided, there’s still the Oda Clan.”

"The Oda Clan? There will be no such thing as reinforcements coming."

"They might, not to mention that Yoshiharu-sama owes us a debt."

"How could there be?"

"There is!"

"Yakurou, the problem here is who will emerge victorious, whether if it's the Mori or Oda Clan. In the end, we will only ally with the winning side."

If dragged into long-term war, Oda Clan with more territories will mostly win the battle, but now Mori Clan has overwhelming advantage on numbers. Naoie muttered to himself.

"Yakurou, next time if you let Hideie meet with that bastard again, I will kill you also!"

"M… My… My lord. I… I… I am a girl you know?"

"Annoying, a Sakai merchant's daughter does not count as girl!"

"When… When did the Sakai... Sakai people offend you my lord?

Naoie seems to be furious of his humiliation right in front of Yoshiharu..

"Bastard! How dare he to toy with me! I definitely won't let go that monkey!"

Next to Naoie, Hideie was looking at the other side of the foot of the mountain with a melancholic expression.

"Yoshiharu-sama, please be safe……"

"Kanbei, we are out from Mt. Shozan, a little more and we will meet with Shikanosuke and leave Himeji Castle!"

"…… Munya…… I'm sorry, I fell asleep……"

"Sleep, just sleep."

"Wu…" Kanbei who was being carried at the back, opened her eyes and let out some sleepy voice.

However, just beyond the mountain, Yoshiharu saw an unbelievable scene.

At this moment……

The Mori Army which was led by Kikkawa Motoharu and Kobayakawa Takakage has already crossed Kozuki Castle and came to Mt. Shozan, ready to surround the diversionary troops led by Yamanaka Shikanosuke.

The amount of their troops are almost like clouds in the sky.

High morale, ordered movement with not a trace of confusion.

Looking at the sudden appearance of Mori Army, the diversionary troops led by Shikanosuke had lost their escape route.

Even if they want to escape, Yumesakigara is right behind them. If they were to try escaping through the river, total annihilation is obvious.

And if they were to turn back and fight, the result will be the same.

Shikanosuke was now at her wit's end.

“Damn…… This…… Ehhhh……? How could this be?”

"Yoshiharu, it's the Mori Army, They are here already. "

"Shikanosuke is surrounded! This is bad! The numbers of diversionary troop is small, it's impossible for them to withstand this kind of army force!"

"What now, Sagara Yoshiharu?"

"What what now, Shikanosuke is gonna die if this continue. I'll breakthrough the enemy line and save Shikanosuke! Kanbei, find a commoner's house to hide yourself!"

"I refuse. A weak soldier like you going to the battlefield without military adviser, it'll definitely be an instant death."

"You had just been rescued and now you're going to dive into death again?"

"No, only if you bring Simon can your chance of survival increase."

"Even if there is a military advisor, there are no soldiers! This chance of survival didn't become any better !"

“Around 0 to 10%, at least I can guarantee that it isn't 0 , right?”

“Get off Get Off!”

“I refuse. Simon wants to repay her debt.”

“I'm just doing things my way, you don't have to feel indebted or anything”

“But, you gambled your life to rescue Simon, didn't you.”

“It goes without saying! We aren't master/subordinate but friends.”

Kanbei smiles with a troubled face.

“Friend huh. Calling a military advisor a friend, humans from the future really are weird.”

“It’s not, friends are friends. In Japanese they are called ‘tomodachi’.”

[5]

“Fufu…… I see… Then let me repay your ‘friendship’.”

(They said the word ‘friendship” in English)

“‘Friendship’? A friend’s ship?”

“You really are an idiot, ‘friendship’ means friendship.”

So this means you still doesn't want to come down from my back, Yoshiharu was troubled.

“It seems that the Oda Clan didn't send any reinforcements here, Onee-Sama.”

“Yeah, because Matsunaga Hisahide of Yamato has revolted.”

“A revolt at such a time."

The Yamanaka Shikanosuke's troops who had tried to drag things out with the Ukita clan by attacking and retreating, were in total chaos in the face of the Mori Army, which had come earlier than expected.

Sitting in the main camp of the Mori clan was the small and elegant shogun - Ashikaga Yoshiaki.

At her side, there are the Mori twins with the exact same look.

Kikkawa Motoharu and Kobayakawa Takakage.

To the Mori clan who have a large amount of soldiers, Shikanosuke's diversionary troops are like a small pea which they can easily crush with just their superior numbers.

"Takakage, the enemy general looks like Yamanaka Shikanosuke."

"Nee-sama, we can finally settle things with that eternal enemy."

"That, that princess knight that is fiercely fighting her enemies is Yamanaka Shikanosuke? What a fierce display of her spear technique, marvelous."

Ashikaga Yoshiaki, who was using a telescope to observe the battlefield, let out a sigh.

"Oh? Who is that soldier carrying a girl on his back? To think that he actually stormed into the Mori Army, does he plan to commit suicide?"

"I'm not sure....?"

"Probably a soldier who had overslept."

Ukita Naoie, with a dejected face rushed into the Mori Army's main camp. He didn't expect that the Mori Army will reach Harima so early.

Should I defect in order to repay Sagara Yoshiharu, nono, he made me show my ugly side right in front of Hideie, I will be utterly disgraced if I don't kill him. But if I did, I need to consider the possibility that the Oda clan might be stronger than the Mori clan in the future but I do not have the time for this anymore.

"Wait! I will definitely capture Yamanaka Shikanosuke alive! I will definitely kill Sagara Yoshiharu! Please give me a little more time!"

Motoharu stared at Naoie with a cold gaze.

"The time is up, shouldn't you commit Seppuku now?"

“This! This gaze of a girl like she's staring at an insect is making me crazy…… No! Please wait!”

“…… Such a disgusting man.”

“The elder sister of the Mori twins I want to clean up the name of the ‘Princess Knight Killer’, please allow me to fight against Sagara Yoshiharu!”

“You don't wanna admit to that tainted name of yours, then die.”

“Please wait! If I didn’t kill Sagara Yoshiharu by myself, my heart would be too frustrated with it!”

“Onee-sama, it's due to Ukita Naoie that we can so easily surround that Yamanaka Shikanosuke.”

The trembling Takakage stopped Motoharu who picked up a small knife.

“As expected of Kobayakawa Takakage, you still acknowledge me.”

“However, if you harm or kill the hostage, Kuroda Kanbei, then commit seppuku on the spot.”

Takakage slightly narrowed her eyes.

“No! I've already returned her to Sagara Yoshiharu without injury.”

“That’s good. Kuroda Kanbei is my friend. You really escaped from death, Ukita Naoie.”

Wh...What a close one…… Sprouting cold sweat, Naoie sighed out in relief.

That expression of Takakage was reminiscent of her father – Mori Motonari, the aura of someone with a cold gaze.

The Mori twins had really inherited the blood and talents of Mori Motonari.

Even without that demon-like strategist Motonari around, opposing these two sisters will definitely be fatal .... Naoie trembled while thinking.

“Did you hear that Takakage. He sent the hostage back , maybe he already became allies with Sagara Yoshiharu. ”

“I did not! I returned her because I was threatened! He is a demonic bastard that took my daughter as a hostage! He was also the one who killed Kuroda Kanbei’s sister! Sagara Yoshiharu was an even more wicked man than I am!”

If Yoshiharu heard this conversation, a fuss will certainly break out, but Naoie will do anything in order to survive. Now that Hideie is back at his side, he is in high spirits.

“Is it? Then go capture Shikanosuke, the battle is done anyway."

“Takakage, your treatment to this fellow was too naïve .”

“Oh, then I’ll be right back! Sagara Yoshiharu, this time I will kill you for sure!”

Naoie vigorously rushed out from the main camp.

“The earliest one who succeeds in the Oda clan, Sagara Yoshiharu. The one who claims that he had come from future. Will he be a fraud even better than Ukita Naoie or a man we should meet at least once?”

“Takakage, Sagara-kun is about to be annihilated. The trapped Sagara Yoshiharu will become a dead body in this battlefield.”

“Yeah, and if the thing about he killing Kuroda Kanbei ’s sister is true, he’s the same as Ukita Naoie, no, it’s much worse. We cannot let him live.”

“Abandoning the Sagara army just because a revolt is happening, the Oda clan isn't something good too.

“Oda Nobuna does not have the talent to be the ruler of the world. Bring me the heads of Yamanaka Shikanosuke and Sagara Yoshiharu, save Miki castle and then immediately bring the army to Kyoto to drive off the Oda clan.”

“This doesn't seem like what the careful Takakage would say.”

“Onee-sama, I’m a little angry now. The Oda clan was saying things like Tenka Fubu, yet right now they are in such a pitiful state. The one who is known to have the talents to be the ruler of the world is just dragging the war out right now. I feel that we have to destroy her completely.

“As expected of the Mori clan, your ambition is as high as the sky.” Ashikaga Yoshiaki opens up her fan and started laughing "Ahahahaha".

Isolated in Harima, the Sagara corps is now facing utter destruction.

~Translator's Notice:

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Chapter 4 : Comet

“Rikyū? It’s dangerous, come down quickly!”

“……”

“Eh? Namban’s alchemy can defeat ghosts?”

A huge ghost is preventing Nobuna from going to Yamato at Lake Ogura. [6]

The aide was terrified and said “Putting the size of the army aside, how are we supposed to deal with this?”

Tea Master Sen no Rikyū while riding a horse, wrapped her small body with black clothing and walked towards Nobuna.

“Isn’t alchemy a technology of turning iron into gold? It’s unreasonable to use those alchemy things to fight.”

Nobuna was worried about Rikyū and tried to stop her .

To begin with, Nobuna didn’t even recruit Rikyū to be part of the suicide squad. Also, how did Rikyū manage to come to the side of Nobuna like a shadow?

"……"

"What? Alchemy is only a technology to produce gold, isn't it?"

"…… (Choking)"

The ghost was also confused.

The petite young Tea Master who wore a Namban style black robe is definitely not an average person/an unusual person.

However, the confusion only lasted for a moment.

"Anyone who wants to protect Oda Nobuna has to die !"

The ghost facing Rikyū swung down its arm.

Rikyū opened her small lips.

While her little fingers tucked in four tea caddies, she shouted with a young tender voice.

"With the name of Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, I command you, let those

wandering souls return to the four elements." (Note : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracelsus)

A whirlwind suddenly appeared in front of the horse that Rikyū rode.

The tea caddies' lid flew up but it hadn't been touched.

The four types of powder inside spread out.

Black powder.

"Spirit of Earth – Black!"

White powder.

"Spirit of Water – White!"

Golden powder.

"Disappearance of Spirit of Air – Golden!"

Crimson powder.

"The burning Flame Serpent – Crimson!"

The four color powders mixed in the wind then, a fire started to burn.

The whirlwind suddenly became a flaming whirlwind and burnt brightly.

The golden powder was probably pure gold and the black powder must be gunpowder.

Nobuna wasn't able to guess the identity of the remaining two powders.

Nobuna didn't know whether it was an alchemist's secret material. Or maybe the unknown substance was refined by Rikyū herself.

It was not from Onmyoudō.

It was also different from the illusions that Matsunaga Hisahide used.

Nor was it any secret ceremony of Christians.

A "technique" that Nobuna had never seen before, appeared in front of her eyes.

"Foreign camouflage skill has no effect on me!"

The ghost opened its hand, and tried to smash Rikyū's small body.

"Philippus Aureolus, Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. With your guidance, destroy that evil spirit! "

The flame tangled around the arms of the ghost.

And it covered up the ghost's whole body.

It was not an illusion.

It was a real flame.

In addition, the ultra-high temperature was a heat that nobody had seen at Japan.

"This is not an illusion…… But…… It's just a flame after all! For me who had discarded the form of a human …… For me who has the body of steel……"

The ghost was still approaching Rikyū.

But it couldn't.

The fire at its body still continued to expand.

The irregular body that surpassed the limit of a human body, started to melt at this ultra-high temperature.

“You…… You are……”

Bang! The ghost’s right arm exploded.

“Oh……!”

“Solvent that can dissolve everything, destroy the body and soul of this wandering ghost.”

“… Who are you…”

Rikyū close the tea caddy, at the same time when the small lid let out a small ‘bang’ sound……

A large explosion roared and the whole body of the ghost had blown away into small pieces.

The flames which surrounded the ghost also disappeared.

Lake Ogura has become peaceful once again.

Nobuna and the aides looked at Rikyū with an unbelievable expression.

"Rikyū, the move you used just now, was it magic?"

"…… (Shaking her head)"

"It seems that alchemy tradition has used the word of magic, but that's not magic? Alchemical work, solvent, can become a weapon and blow the ghost up? That's really a terrifying Namban technique!"

"…… (Nodding)"

"What exactly is that solvent?"

"…… (Hum)"

"During the alchemy experiment, the substance that dissolves is a 'burnable liquid'? Using such a dangerous thing in the tearoom? The destruction is just too strong."

"…… (Hum)"

"Hey? You mean it was supposed to be used when dealing with Matsunaga Hisahide, but you just used all of the material in that one match?"

"…… (Looking down)"

"Also, the opponent is Harima…… If Kuroda Kanbei isn't present, then there is no way the spell can be completed and there will also be no way to kill the ghost. "

"…… (Nodding)"

She's remaining silent, but Rikyū wanted to tell Nobuna that 'The regeneration of the ghost's body still needed some time, so move on to Yamato now'.

Nobuna told the aides and the retainers that 'The ghost won't appear anymore, march on!" After that, she rode the horse and went South to where Yamato is.

It seems that Rikyū brought the material of the solvent with her to deal with Matsunaga Hisahide's Persian illusions.

Repeated refining and fusion of the substance, and able to manipulate the substance of the alchemy at will, it 's the latest technology at the time, which later became the foundation of modern science.

Rikyū noticed that that material that was used for alchemy could be used as a weapon.

However, the weapon that Rikyū prepared had been used for another purpose.

Nobuna still didn't know the identity of the ghost.

But there was one point that Nobuna knew pretty clearly.

The Onmyoudō and the mysterious clans' ancient spells were not working in this new era anymore.

Tanegashima's overwhelming destructive power and the Namban's technology known as alchemy. Also the Iron Giant that was built by Kanbei using Namban science technology.

And Matsunaga Hisahide who uses ancient Persian illusions, perhaps she's also one of the stars that were destined to be destroyed.

"……"

"Never mind Rikyū, thank you. You already have no more weapons, so don't fight with Danjō."

Yes.

The one who will deal with Matsunaga Hisahide was Nobuna herself.

Nobuna must overcome Matsunaga Hisahide with her own power and will.

Nobuna's body was filled with energy.

"Seriously, Nobuna's luck is really good. The ghost that was created by Tsuchimikado's spell has also been destroyed by the Tea Master……"

Manmi Senchiyo impatiently thought, 'if this state continues, Oda Nobuna would defeat Matsunaga Hisahide'.

The path to Yamato is straight to the South.

To the center of Yamato, Nara.

By the time Nobuna reached Nara, the Matsunaga army had already surrounded the armed priests at Todai Temple's Shosoin.

Why would Danjō fight the armed priests at Nara when it's unnecessary? Nobuna starts to have a suspicion .

If they ignored the armed priests and directly attacked Honnoji, Nobuna would probably already have committed seppuku at Honnoji by now.

No matter what, this was the second time that Matsunaga Hisahide revolted.

I must find the reason of this rebellion.

The first rebellion was to test the ability of Nobuna.

An assault at Kyo when Nobuna was absent that cornered the shogun, Imagawa Yoshimoto.

That time, Hisahide's doing was straight to the point.

So this procrastinated rebellion is……?

"Those rebels are fighting with the armed priests. So let's break their formation, break their morale at once!"

Even if she's unable to read what Hisahide is thinking, Nobuna was still giving orders while riding her horse.

"Charge!"

"Hime-sama, this is dangerous!"

Manmi Senchiyo advised to 'set up the camp here, observe the fight between Hisahide and the armed priests, and wait for the right time'. But Nobuna didn't take that seriously.

"I'm now going to fight Danjō with my life! Senchiyo, you must come too!"

"So it means that I will also fight?"

"Yeah. If you want to have an important post as a retainer at Oda Clan, managing internal affairs is not nearly enough. Anyone who can't bet their life at the battlefield is not needed by the Oda Clan."

"…… Yes……"

Senchiyo isn't really worried about Nobuna.

If Nobuna herself became the vanguard, the aides that were looking up at Nobuna would also bet their life to fight with Matsunaga Hisahide.

If it's other daimyo, it's still okay, but Matsunaga Hisahide herself was far too dangerous.

(Rather than a daimyo, Matsunaga Hisahide was more like a monster. I am just a spy. Although it's not that I can't fight, but to fight with that unidentified monster… … Don't joke around……)

Although Senchiyo was in a panic, they were already at the center of the battlefield.

There was no way to escape now.

If she escaped, then she would be treated as a traitor and be arrested and executed. Even if she wasn't executed, she could no longer become an aide anymore.

If she wanted to continue to be a spy and complete the task, then the only choice was to gain some achievement here.

No, it's far better to assassinate Nobuna during the chaos.

Yes, when Nobuna and Matsunaga Hisahide are fighting each other, that is the best chance,

Senchiyo finally noticed.

Matsunaga Hisahide's someone who has been adored as a mother by Nobuna.

Nobuna will definitely lose her cool by the intense passion.

If that moment comes, Nobuna will be assassinated.

(Even if Matsunaga Hisahide saw me, it will not pose a problem. She is also revolting because she wants to kill Nobuna. She won't stop me, and maybe, she will even use her evil spell to help me.)

Senchiyo has made her resolution.

Assassinate Nobuna while she's being distracted by Matsunaga Hisahide.

I stayed at the side of Nobuna just to do this!

If this is so, then there is no more reason to fear Matsunaga Hisahide.

Rather, she could be considered an ally.

(But for Oda Nobuna to not suspect me as a spy even once. She is being called a devil but the truth is she's just a good person. It's terrible to be so spoiled.)

Senchiyo leaked out a cold smile with cruel eyes.

Nobuna rushed towards the battlefield without knowing anything.

"It's there! See, the one who is riding the elephant is Danjō! Charge!"

"Elephant?!"

Nobuna pointed out the direction.

A long-nosed monster was outlasting the armed priests and gives out “Oh…” sound.

The armed priests are shouting “Let the deer army on! ”, “Ashura, please bless us!”, but were still wiped out by the monster, as they had no knowledge on how to fight an elephant.

It was like an adult beating a child.

For this scene to be shown in front of her eye, Senchiyo was totally speechless.

“That elephant is an animal from the other side of the sea, I've even seen it at Sakai!”

“Hime-sama, please wait!”

Nobuna and Senchiyo were riding the horse in a line and rushed to the front of the elephant.

At the back of the elephant, there was a colorful sedan chair.

The person in the sedan chair was Matsunaga Hisahide.

Waving a tobacco pipe while looking arrogantly at Nobuna.

Nobuna shouts against Hisahide.

“Danjō!”

Matsunaga Hisahide split the smoke and started to talk.

“Too slow, Oda Nobuna. If I directly attacked Honnoji, you would have already been dead by now.”

“Why? Why? Why did you betray me? Is it because I’m incompetent? I will change…… So, please come back!”

“Why did I betray you? Because the comet is too bright.”

“Comet?”

“I can’t cause a fuss if I’m with you. You opposed me to burn down Mount Hiei, opposed the plan to kill all the armed priests, and protected Mount Hiei and the name of the armed priests! You also opposed me to kill all the

armed priests at Kōfuku-ji, and also opposed the plan of burning down the Nara temple!”

“Kōfuku-ji? You mean Kōfuku-ji?”

Nobuna have no memory regarding the event at Kōfuku-ji.

As for the plan of burning down Mount Hiei, the stronghold of the enemy, it was indeed stopped at the very last moment.

However, Nobuna felt that something was wrong from Hisahide’s words.

Nobuna had once drunk a medicine made by Hisahide , so she didn't remember if she really opposed the plan of burning down Mount Hiei.

It’s all thanks to retainers like Takenaka Hanbei and Sagara Yoshiharu that let her return to normal and stopped the burning plan.

But she wasn't that hostile against the Nara temple.

Nara was a God state at Yamato, a country that even a Warring State daimyo can’t get in easily.

So even Nobuna didn’t even dare to interfere with Yamato, so she left everything to Matsunaga Hisahide who had her headquarters at Yamato.

“What? Really? I didn't know this at all!”

“The one who wants to burn down Mount Hiei is Danjō!”

“That’s it. That guy is the one, who was against us armed priests for many years, the enemy who wants to burn down Tōdai-ji’s Great Buddha!”

“Oda Nobuna protected Kōfuku-ji and Tōdai-ji’s armed priests from Danjō?”

“That is why Danjō betrayed Oda Nobuna!”

The armed priests were shocked by this unexpected fact, and begun to praise Nobuna.

(What’s going on? Did that woman took some wrong medicine and started talking nonsense?)

Manmi Senchiyo, who was eyeing the chance to assassinate Nobuna, stayed behind Nobuna and was shocked by the sudden situation where the armed priests

were shouting “Protect Oda Nobuna-dono!” “She rushes to save us with a small force!” while starting to regroup.

(There is no way it can be done.)

Matsunaga Hisahide continued.

“Also, the other day when I planned to burn down Yamato’s Imperial Palace and kill Himiko, and was ready to set fire at Kyoto. But Oda Nobuna, you once again stopped me and protected the Himiko. From the very beginning, you didn't plan to destroy this devoured world!”

So that was the truth! Now I know the truth about the fire at Kyoto!

Danjō not only attacked the Shogun, but also attempted to kill the Himiko!

Oda Nobuna protected Himiko-sama!

“Come to think of it, the ancestors of Oda family…”

“Oh, it semms like they were priests at Echizen!”

“It’s not the enemy of Himiko-sama!”

The armed priests stared at Matsunaga Hisahide, who is riding at the top of the elephant and laughing like an evil demon.

They didn't even doubt the words of Hisahide.

Only Nobuna felt that the words of Hisahide showed some hypocrisy.

"Danjō! What are you talking about…? Look at my eyes, Danjō!"

"I want to use the flame of Ahura Mazdā to destroy everything of this nation, you are different, Oda Nobuna! You, rather than destroying this nation, you tried to rebuild this nation covered in flames. The path we have chosen is the exact the opposite! You absolutely cannot become my lord!"

"Danjō! Wait!"

"Guys! Oda's elite force is strong! Let's retreat and defend Tamonyama Castle!"

Hisahide led the elephant and started to retreat from Todai Temple's Shosoin.

Matsunaga's army also started to retreat.

"Ohhh! We've been saved!"

The armed priests who were both physically and mentally exhausted after the war with Matsunaga Army, began to cry and embrace each other, "Nobuna-sama, thank you very much!" "We will never forget this kindness of yours!"

The Matsunaga Army started to get confused.

"Hime-sama, we cannot go to Tamonyama Castle. Tamonyama Castle is a castle that is not suitable for defense."

"Go to Shigisan Castle, Yamato's biggest and hardest fortress should be there."

"Even if it were surrounded by Oda, at least we could still withstand for a few months, after the time come, Mori's Army that broke through Harima will come back and aid us!"

"The number of Oda's Army is only few in the first place, so there is nothing to be afraid of!"

"This is the best chance to destroy Oda Nobuna!"

"A retreat here? What is exactly the reason of this rebellion?!"

The effect of the mustard had passed, so the soldiers started regaining their sanity.

Facing the retainers who were riding their horses and complaining, Hisahide chose to remain silent.

"Wait! Danjō! Tell me the reason! Why would you… Why would you do such a thing?!"

Suddenly, an explosion happened at the back of Nobuna who was chasing Hisahide.

Taking a look at the back

A smoke was coming out from the back of Todai Temple's Shosoin.

"That was Yamato's Shosoin…… it exploded?!"

At the same time.

Nobuna's concentration that has never been off since she met with Hisahide, broke at that moment.

Manmi Senchiyo, who stopped her breath, followed Nobuna at her back and finally found an opportunity to assassinate her.

"Oda Nobuna, your life is mine!"

Senchiyo rode a horse and approached Nobuna silently.

She already reached the distance where she could kill anyone with only one stab.

Nobuna who had been distracted by the Shosoin was unaware of this.

(Hum. Although I've been ordered not to assassinate you, but I shouldn't miss such a great opportunity. This was surprisingly easy.)

At the moment when she wanted to pull off a small knife…

"Nin nin. I won't let you do that."

Senchiyo was pulled down from her horse from the back.

There was a small shadow clinging behind her.

“You this…… Are you…… a Shinobi……?!”

No response.

(A mistake! There should have been no shinobi when we departed from Honnoji!)

I’m also an experienced shinobi, but to be attacked so easily from behind……

Then Senchiyo lost her consciousness.

One of her vitals was punched, and she fainted.

When Nobuna noticed and asked “Where is Senchiyo? ” Manmi Senchiyo had already disappeared from the battlefield.

The movement/action of Matsunaga Hisahide has been full of contradictions.

While she declared a rebellion, Nobuna who had been at Kyoto's Honnoji should have been in a totally vulnerable state, but instead of attacking Nobuna, they wasted their time at Nara with the Koufuku-ji's armed priests, and lost the opportunity to strike at Nobuna.

Nobuna brought a small force and came to Nara with the determination to fight to death, but Hisahide had ordered her army to retreat instead of confronting them.

They didn't even go to Yamato's biggest and hardest fortress, the Shigisan Castle but went to Todai-ji Temple' s Tamonyama Castle.

Although it's being called as Tamonyama Castle, but the truth is, it's more appropriate to call it a hill city. The luxurious castle tower and its exotic flower garden had taken Hisahide a lot of effort to work it out to this state. But as a defensive stronghold, it's far too fragile and it's on a plain, so it's basically done once it has been put under siege.

Nobuna had only a small number of aides and retainers, but even Nobuna herself didn't expect that all

armed priests of Kōfuku-ji would declare “It’s the time to return the kindness of the Oda Clan who protected us from Danjō!” and joined Nobuna’s army.

Although Hisahide, on the elephant, had been complaining about Nobuna, but in fact all the content was the exact opposite of what people thought of Nobuna, and the truth changed to Nobuna saving the Buddhist forces and Yamato’s Imperial Palace from the hands of Hisahide.

After hearing their conversation, all armed priests joined Nobuna’s force all of a sudden.

The one who became a Yamato samurai from the armed priest at Kōfuku-ji and the one who has the most authority among them, Tsutsui Junkei, had decided to join Nobuna’s army by stating “Let’s join the Oda army for the time being.”

The smoke at Todai Temple’s Shosoin was extinguished down immediately.

Although there were small commotions, but it didn't cause a big fire, and they were able to put the fire off without much trouble.

Apart from Manmi Senchiyo suddenly going missing, incredible luck came to Nobuna one after another.

Finally, Nobuna and the armed priests surrounded Matsunaga Hisahide's hideout, the Tamonyama Castle.

Around midnight.

Matsunaga Army's footmen who were still enthusiastically worshiping Hisahide started to let out sighs one after another.

"Am I dreaming?"

"What are we actually doing?"

"The Matsunaga Clan is already done. Run, run away!"

With the expression as if the possession of the army were released, the majority of the soldiers ran away from the castle.

Nobuna ignored those soldiers

There no longer remained anyone inside Tamonyama Castle who could protect Matsunaga Hisahide. Except

for that scary illusion master, Matsunaga Hisahide herself, it was almost an empty castle.

Nobuna also didn't listen to the idea of the armed priests to burn down the castle.

Along with Rikyū, Nobuna entered Tamonyama Castle.

This was to persuade Matsunaga Hisahide to surrender.

Nobuna still couldn’t understand the reason behind this rebellion.

The actions of Hisahide who had rebelled, no matter how Nobuna thought about it, it was definitely as stupid as choosing death herself.

And when Hisahide cursed Nobuna in front of those armed priests, it wasn't the truth no matter how you looked at it.

Some of those words were intended to help Nobuna, to clear the misunderstanding that the world had on her.

What’s more, Nobuna didn't even feel that Hisahide was really unsatisfied with her.

Hisahide and Nobuna should be in a mother-daughter relationship.

Nobuna had already lost her foster father Saito Dosan.

She couldn't handle losing Hisahide too.

“I must save her no matter what.”

“Welcome, Nobuna-sama. I’ve been waiting for you.”

Nobuna and Rikyū went inside to the castle tower.

Matsunaga Hisahide was waiting at the golden tea fort as the master.

The floor, roof, walls, and even the tea equipment, everything was made from gold.

Even the door and ceiling beam were also made from gold.

Matsunaga Hisahide used a totally different smile from the battlefield, a gentle smile to welcome Nobuna and Rikyū.

"Unfortunately, this is all gilded. I still lack the money to build an all pure gold tea fort."

"It is……"

"…… (Heartbeat)"

Rikyū seems like wanting to say that this was completely the opposite idea of Gothic Lolita gold tea fort and was totally not the idea of this country's people. She was shocked until she turned speechless.

Nobuna and Rikyū were sitting in front of Hisahide, who was holding the world treasure – Hiratagumo, and looking at the golden tea set.

It seems like it has no poison at all.

"Yamato, a country of Mahoroba."

Hisahide started to sing out an ancient poem.

“Thou foolish child, hiding in the mountains, Yamato city’s comet”

“Is that?”

“Ufu, there was a time in Yamato, that it was spelled beautifully as “Sora-ryū Hashi” and what I want to point out to you is. In the words of “Sora-ryū Hashi”(宇), you can find the word “Persian” in it”[7]

“Danjo’s homeland”

"The Persian that came from the western continent was shipwrecked in this island. And that Persian was my ancestor, and just like the Persian God Mazda which was known as Ashura, things have changed, and the Persian culture has continued to be passed down in this beautiful land of Yamato."

“So that’s why Danjo never left Yamato”

“In Shosoin’s shrine temple, there are ancestral treasures from Persia, so I wanted to take it back.”

“It’s because it’s the treasures of your ancestors right?

"No, those monks just wanted to erase all Persian related things like it never existed in the first place. And they closed this country, twisting the history and making them the one and only that built this country, and they even refused fellowships from other countries"

And as a result of this war, just like Yamato, this county would someday be swallowed by the Namban. Hisahide then laughed.

"We don't have much time. Please open the eyes of this country, Nobuna-sama"

"Then Danjo, why did you rebel? You, wanting to kill me, it's a lie right?"

"In order to make a new world, the old world needs to turn into ashes. You need a nasty fellow to give a fatal blow to the old power. But the destroyer must not come to the new world."

Hisahide said this fluently.

"Kofukuji and also Mount Hiei, will be forever grateful to Nobuna-sama and will not attempt to stop you in your crusade if you cut me down."

It was still not over. For some time she was silent, as if she's preparing words scrupulously.

"With this, the notoriety of Nobuna-sama will be greatly reduced and all of your wrong actions, will be undone by the witch, Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide behind the scene."

"Danjo?"

"The Yamato soldiers that were fighting the armed monks will stop and the country of Yamato will have peace at last."

"So you are saying that the soldiers of Yamato and armed monks will separate and the monks will disarm themselves and go back to Kofukuji?

"Yes, Yamato will have peace, and after you have cut me down Nobuna-sama, they will surely show mercy and they will let you pacify Japan"

"No way, you did this …… for my sake?"

"I wonder, if Nobuna-sama had led a troop, I might have killed them"

Hisahide snapped her finger.

From the ceiling, there was a body that suddenly dropped and was now swinging.

It was Manmi Senchiyo.

“Senchiyo?”

“ …… She is an enemy spy”

POOF Another shadow appeared in front of Nobuna .

It was Goemon.

“Goemon? Why are you here?”

“I, in order to swave(save) Takenaka-shi, had gone to Mt. Shosoin to steal *STUTTERING* The Ranjatai but, in my stead, Matsunaga-shi had alweady(already) stolen it …… uuuhhh~”

“Save Hanbei? Ranjatai?”

“I’m not good at talking long sentences …… Matsunaga-shi will explain the rest”

"Danjo, what's going on?"

"While you were sick, this Manmi Senchiyo here blocked all the letters that were sent to you by your retainers, planning to isolate you and putting a crack in your relationship with them, thus making the spying easier for her."

"Then the order about the execution of Harima's little sister came from her?"

"Yes, it was Manmi Senchiyo who ordered it"

"Is this true!?"

"Hime-sama, Kuroda-shi's little sister is safe, Takenaka-shi had revealed the truth about it"

"…… Ah~~ …… thank goodness~~"

From Nobuna's eyes, tears of relief could be seen.

Now that the tension has vanished, tears won't stop flowing from her eyes.

“I, I was so scared to face Harima and Yoshiharu, I was regretting it so much. Thank goodness…… really, thank goodness”

“Hahahaha, it can’t be helped if my cover is blown now, but I will not reveal my employer!”

Senchiyo shouted while still being tied up.

“Nobuna-sama, with the alchemy of Persia. I will make her throw up the name of her employer”

“Alchemy?”

“The name of it is “Flower Gods spell”.”

Hisahide had taken a bag from her bosom.

Inside the bag, there were various colourful powders.

An intense sweet aroma had covered the tea room

In the corner of the tearoom that was covered by a brilliant fragrance, Hisahide read another line from the Kojiki (古). [8]

“Flowers bloom and wither in twenty days, to the frenzied excitement of a city of people.”

The tied up Senchiyo who had drunk the content of the bag was struggling with sounds “uh, no… no~!” but you see a sigh of ecstasy in her teary eyes.

“It is an ancient poem composed by Kayama Koji of the Tang era about a poppy flower when emperors and the beautiful courtesans still roamed the land. It was about a ruler who had forgotten to do his duties because he favoured Youkihi too much. And Youkihi admired the poppy flower” [9]

Nobuna nods, “Kayama Koji, it’s about Haku Rakuten right?” [10]

“One of the raw materials of this potion is poppy flowers that were blooming in my garden inside Tamonyama castle. Since the time Youkihi had admired the poppy flower, it was also known in that country as " Kao (花)" and "God flower ()", but what they don’t know is that this is a traditional medicine that came from the west"

Said by Nagahide.

Youkihi, who came from the west and deceived the emperor by alluring him with her beauty and fragrance. The beautiful courtesan who has fascinated the whole of Great Tang had Persian blood in her veins.

Youhiki did not admire the flower because of its beauty.

In order to manipulate emperor Xuanzong, she needed the raw material "God flower (花)" to make the Persian potion, that's why she needed a large amount of poppy flower.

Senchiyo moaned while trembling.

"I won't talk; I'll commit suicide …… huh? I can't bite out my tongue"

"You have already been affected by my skill; I deprived your freedom to use your mouth, so that you can't bite your tongue out. Now, who ordered you?"

Hisahide stuffed something in her mouth.

However, Senchiyo choose to spit it out of her mouth.” I have taken it out, Matsunaga Danjo do you really think a petty trick can stop-” but suddenly, ”Ugu~!” she lost consciousness and became motionless.

“She- she died.”

“Senchiyo!?”

Nobuna ran and held her but Senchiyo didn’t breath anymore.

It’s warm. The body was still alive but her heart was not beating anymore.

“Well, killing a young and beautiful maiden is such a waste. So I played a little and put a spirit that will stop her heart from beating”

” …… But, she still died …… ” Nobuna mourned for Senchiyo’s sake.

“This is a technique that only works to Fuma ninjas. So this lass, is one of the Fuma ninjas then?”

"Fuma? Why would a ninja from the Houjou clan of Kanto region even be here in Kyo?"

"Perhaps, the one behind this conspiracy is Konoe Sakihisa"

"Konoe? That black-tooth bastard? Really?"

"Please don't be fooled, he might not have an elegant appearance, but he is a master of conspiracy. Please don't underestimate the Fujiwara clan who had reigned in the Yamato's Imperial Palace for years, Nobuna-sama"

"Why, why would the Kampaku of the Yamato's Imperial Palace do this? I can't understand it!"

"Because of his own ambition to manipulate this country, he is the man who deceived the pure Uesugi Kenshin and tried to dominate Kanto once, that's the kind of man he is"

"Even so"

Nobuna still couldn't believe it.

"Even though many believed that I destroyed the Ashikaga Shogunate and attacked Ashikaga Yoshiteru, but the true culprit was Konoe Sakihisa who ordered me and destroyed the Shogunate from the inside"

Konoe Sakihisa was so ambitious that he is willing to go that far.

Nobuna suddenly frowned and said "I was careless" while grinding her teeth.

She thought that the government officials just knew how to hold tea parties, but she now learned that she was making light of them.

"Maybe he had an agreement with the Houjou clan. Now that he had abandoned to conquer Kanto, he might be planning to control the Yamato's Imperial Palace while there is still confusions."

"Control the Imperial Palace? Nobles with authorities? Why all of a sudden? You're joking right Danjo?"

"For him, the only one who can rule this country were nobles with powers; he is that kind of monster, and he realized that you are nuisance for his ambitions"

"Danjo, even though Konoe Sakihisa is a conspirator, the soldiers won't move just because of a conspirators' whim. Setting aside the old thinking of Uesugi Kenshin, all of that is impossible!"

"Yes, Konoe learned this too in the Kanto region. So now, he has a strategist, a strategist who hide himself in the shadows. That person, without a doubt is a strategist that has a prided experience in this bloody battlefield. Including the Houjou clan, that person will surely convince more famous warriors"

"Who is that strategist?"

"Well, they are just using Konoe Sakihisa for their own ambitions. He is surely a dreadful strategist. For them, Konoe Sakihisa is just a pawn for their ambition"

"Who would do such a thing?"

"I don't know, the doll that is my eyes and ears don't know to that extent and it's already gone. And my hands are already full in thinking of a way to save a girl in Harima."

Hisahide had placed a strange black thing in front of Nobuna.

The length is 5 feet long and the weighs 305 momme.

“This is the treasure of Mt. Shousoin, the most valuable treasure in this country, the Ranjatai”

“So this is the rumoured Ranjatai”

“Until now, only a few were allowed to cut a piece of Ranjatai in Yamato’s Imperial Palace. Starting with Ashikaga Yoshimitsu who gained tremendous wealth in the golden age of the Muromachi Shogunate, Ashikaga Yoshinori who tried to unify the world and fought Mt. Hiei and Kanto, Ashikaga Yoshimasa who had holed up in Ginkaku castle causing the Onin War, and the Toki clan from Mino who was overthrown by Saito Dousan because they were being overachievers”

The Ashikaga Clan who knew the effects of the Ranjatai that gives longevity had made elixirs of longevity for their long reign and waited for it to grow back, but the Toki clan had cut some of it while being unaware of its value, giving Saito Dosan a reason to revolt and take the Toki clan’s wealth. This is also the

reason why I stayed young and beautiful after I took dose of it. Hisahide explained to Nobuna.

“I have heard that it is a fragrant wood, but it looks like a stone..... no, rather, It’s like a shiny jet black jewel”

“…… *BADUMP**BADUMP*”

This is a very rare treasure and close to the " Philosopher's Stone", which is the ultimate goal of alchemy. Rikyuu showed her thoughts with a sign.

“When I was pretending to be dead, Matsunaga-shi used that time to steal it” *STUTTERING*

“Thanks to her, we safely escaped from that place.”

“Goemon! Why were you playing thief with Danjo!? You know that this is a valuable treasure of Yamato’s Imperial Palace right!!?”

“Auuu~~, it’s for Takenaka-shi’s sake.”

“Hanbei?”

“Nobuna-sama, please bring this to Sagara Yoshiharu-dono in Harima immediately.”

"Why did Takenaka Hanbei want it?"

"That lass, has an illness and she won't live long, however, if she can take a dosage of Ranjatai, it's possible to prolong her life for a while, or so I heard."

"Hanbei's days are numbered?"

"Just to steal the Ranjatai and save Takenaka Hanbei, Sagara Yoshiharu-dono was prepared to raise a revolt against Nobuna-sama if necessary."

"No way, then Danjo?"

"When she heard the story, Matsunaga-shi said that Sagara-shi does not need to raise a revolt and clash with Hime-sama." *STUTTERING*

"Let me who was known to always revolt, do it."

It seems that many events happened while Nobuna was sick in Honnoji temple.

The reason for this was Manmi Senchiyo who blocked the reports before reaching to her.

Goemon tried giving her the reports properly.

"…… Unyaaa~~, I'm too tired to speak anymore."

Because she was stuttering too much, she gave up on explaining.

"When you don't need it anymore, return it to Yamato's Imperial Palace. Please report that you found it, and if they asked why it got so short, tell them that it got blown up by Danjo, who blew it up in a Hiragumo."

"Blown up?"

"It was me who burned up Todai Temple's Great Buddha. Then Nobuna-sama said that if I surrendered the Hiragumo, she will spare me, but the traitor Matsunaga Danjo rejected your offer and said that she won't give this Hiragumo to anyone. It's a little underhanded to lie, but no one will suspect it."

Hisahide closed her eyes, and then showed a gentle smile.

"Danjo, I can't……"

"And also, because I already rebelled once against Nobuna-sama, no one will doubt about it. You let the

Tsukomogami eggplant to live under the sun. But I answered that this priceless Hiragumo is more precious than my life, and refuse to give it to anyone.”

Nobuna’s eyes became wide open.

“Then Danjo, if I said that “I’ll pay it” at that time, what will you do?”

“Yes, then I will say “I’ll blow up together with my Hiragumo”. If this news reached the streets of Kyoto, this will surely become a hot topic. ”

“Then, you’re intending to die from the very beginning!?”

“Today, I burned the halls of Todai’s Hall of the Great Buddha. Who would have thought that I will have bad karma; that this Matsunaga Danjo will have retribution, and the one who will grant that retribution will be Nobuna-sama who is even the one pacifying this country .”

Nobuna finally understood.

Matsunaga Hisahide intends to die and shoulder all the grave notorieties of Nobuna.

From the very beginning, causing a stupid rebellion like this to die, fighting the armed monks willfully, and surrounding the burned Shosoin of Todai Temple, and cooperating in stealing the Ranjatai.

And to deliberately chose to burn the Great Buddha on this day, as her death anniversary.

Just to make the people think that Buddha's punishment has finally given to her.

“Danjo, you ..... When did you plan to die and shoulder my notoriety?”

“Perhaps at Kiyomizu Temple. When I saw Takenaka Hanbei, that young girl had already resolved herself.”

“Hanbei’s resolve?”

“In order to open up a new path to the new world for this country’s people, that girl resolved herself to go head on even though this would mean that she would suffer the most if the old world got destroyed. When I saw that figure of hers, the lost soul in me was saved”

It seems that Hisahide couldn't be convinced to stop anymore.

“Even at that time when we sieged Mount Hiei, I also lost to Takenaka Hanbei. If we really did extinguished the eternal flame, there was no need to kill the armed monks in the first place. Indeed, she is truly the Komei of this modern time. Her wisdom was more bountiful than me.”

Everything that happened here was planned long ago.

“By stealing the Ranjatai, I’ll be able to return the favor by saving her life, but to die in Yamato, it kind of feels that this is fate.”

“……”

“I almost forgot. While we have the opportunity, please take this medicine to Kuchiki Shinano in the west of Omi. He helped us escape in the retreat of Kanegasaki. Nobuna-sama, after my death give a dose of this to him and his sanity will come back.”

“…… Dearuka..”

Nobuna regretted that she didn't realize the resolve of Hisahide much earlier.

Such a thing, I do not want that!

"I think it is time for me to leave. With this, the Oda clan will lose their notoriety if the culprit died. And please don't let me live, I already raised two revolts against Nobuna-sama, they will question the integrity of your Tenka Fubu, so we must do this."

"I can't!"

"Nobuna-sama, someday people will die. And by that time, we must say goodbye to our loved ones."

"……No~~! ……"

Nobuna started to cry and flew to Hisahide chest.

Hisahide then softly stroke Nobuna's head.

"The Viper is already gone~! And Danjo is also leaving me too~~!?This is too much~! You're so cruel~!"

"This is the rule of this world."

"I don't care~! Please, I beg of you~! Please don't leave me~~! Danjo~!"

"Nobuna-sama, please don't be so spoiled by me, because we won't see in this lifetime anymore. And from now on, you must succeed in pacifying this country"

"……No~~! ……"

Her words did not come out anymore.

"Nobuna-sama, there's no time to waste anymore. You must pacify this country as soon as possible, and sail out to the sea. And my homeland… in the far west, please have a look at it with your own eyes."

"Your also coming with me Danjo~!"

"Geez, please don't act too spoiled. Dousan and I had already given all we had for you."

"……Danjo~?"

"I won't give the thing you hope for, I won't spoil you. You're not a child anymore, you're the one who will stop this horrid war."

With Hisahide's kind words, Nobuna's tears had stop.

It felt like a mother who is scolding her child.

"Your heart is not empty anymore. That emptiness that you feel, please fill it up with me and Dousan's memories and please, don't turn into a demon lord."

Nobuna slowly left Hisahide's embrace.

Her lips were trembling.

And with eyes that's full of sadness.

But still, Nobuna understands that she must not cry in front of Hisahide anymore.

She has gone back to her seat and drank the last tea made by Danjo.

"Nobuna-sama, if ever you are crushed by loneliness, please rely to your loved ones that are around you."

"Can I, really, do that?"

She can't speak any long words anymore.

Because if she does, her tears would flow out again.

Nobuna could only say little words now from her mouth.

“Yes, you don’t need to be afraid. You always held precious things within you, even now, but if you always do that, you’ll get tired from depression. Me and Dousan had noticed this too late.”

“I’m, not tired ……”

“You have a lot of friends. And also, there is Sagara Yoshiharu-dono who jumped through time just to be by your side. Please be more honest to your feelings.”

“De……,aru……ka”

She had drunk the bitter tea.

The tea party in the golden tearoom was coming to its end.

Goemon disappeared without a sound.

And also Rikyuu “……Hiragumo……” murmured in an anime-ish voice and then bowed and left the tea room.

And the last one, Nobuna while biting her lips stood up.

In her thin arms, she was embracing the Ranjatai.

While hugging the dead Manmi Senchiyo who seems to be still alive, Hisahide smiled suspiciously.

“Nobuna-sama, tonight, please pay attention to the sky because today there will be a comet to appear.”

At dawn today

Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide with her Hiragumo, exploded at Tamonyama Castle.

It was the same day that she burned down the Todai Temple’s Hall of the Great Buddha.

Matsunaga Hisahide who was like a monkey, that had caused rebellion in this war was now burning and passed away.

Matsunaga Hisahide failed in her rebellion and blew herself along with Hiragumo. On that day, a burning flame ball that was crossing the sky had been seen by the locals and feared. They called it “Danjo’s star.”

~Translator's Notice:

This chapter is translated by our group members, Yong Cai Teh, Mark and their team members. Do show them your thanks by going over to the group and drop them a comment.

For more info on updates, please visit https://www.facebook.com/groups/OdaNobunaLN.Eng/

Chapter 5 : The rout of Harima (Part two)

Around the same time,

Wakasa

Facing the Coast of Japan Sea, this land, governed by Niwa Nagahide was gradually stabilizing.

“The forces of the Oda clan are coming!”

Reactions like this aren't few and from that, riots were abundant at first, but the gentle Nagahide steadily and quietly settled things down, and was able to grasp the hearts of the people of Wakasa in time.

Nagahide likes to listen to the opinions and reports of various people for work-related matters and though it takes time, the work done is reliable.

Leading the Northern troops, Shibata Katsuie was facing the formidable enemy Uesugi Kenshin.

Being assigned with the role of the guard of the capital , Akechi Mitsuhide is currently launching a furious attack on Tamba.

Takigawa Kazumasu who had almost single-handedly conquered the vast country Ise by herself was now embarked on strengthening her naval forces.

Being appointed as the commander of the Chuugoku conquering forces, Sagara Yoshiharu is currently fighting with the Mori clan.

Out of the 4 Oda clan Devas and Saru, only Niwa Nagahide is peacefully being the master of Wakasa.

Of course as a Daimyō, Nagahide have her own "Niwa clan retainers" that belongs to her but all they were unhappy about not having any achievements from the peaceful work they are doing..

In Wakasa, there's no land that Nagahide can conquer nor enemy Nagahide had to face..

And so, there's no achievements that can be achieved like what the retainers hope.

“Our princess is just not ambitious enough.”

These were the remarks of her vexed retainers.

To the retainers, Nagahide would always ignore it with a smile.

“There must always be someone doing the backstage chores.”

Using this tension lacking sentence to handle her retainers.

But ever since Nagahide came to Wakasa, she does not seem to be in the spirit of things..

Her complexion was not too good.

And there is no vitality in her either.

Among the retainers, there were rumors why is she like that. "Hime-sama actually wanted to go to the forefront" ”It seems so” ”Even though she said that this is 100 pts and was the right thing to do, but in her heart it’s a 0 pts”

But in fact, she was not depressed because she is the Daimyō of Wakasa now.

But the true reason was that now all of the retainers were scattered, she was worried for Nobuna and Yoshiharu.

While looking at Wakasa bay from the window of her Honmaru, Nagahide decided in her heart.

For Nobuna's ambitions and dreams, she couldn't understand.

Nobuna's existence has surpassed the common sense of the people of this country and was far beyond removed from this era.

Like the sea in front of her eyes, the dream of Nobuna was too vast.

Nagahide couldn't understand why an unprecedented genius like her would suddenly appear on this small island that has no world-renowned heroes.

Perhaps the prayers of the people of this country that wishes to end this dreadful cycle of war led to the birth of Nobuna in this country.

However, Nagahide understands more than anyone the maiden heart of the girl named Nobuna.

Nobuna's heart will, in different situations and different times, show different expressions on her face.

At times when she's calm, she is like a wave that gently sways at the shore of a beach, and she's like a raging tsunami when she's angry.

And when the people see that face full of fury, they tend to look upon her like a demon.

Her love was too deep.

Not just her intellect and talent, even on the extent of her emotions, she was abnormal.

Is the fact that she was not loved by her mother Tsuchida Gozen as a child related?

(When Nobuhide-sama died, the heart of Hime-sama was in a verge of collapse.)

Oda Nobuhide had found the latent potential in her and has continued to encourage Nobuna and at the day of his funeral.

Nobuna had barged at the funeral with a foolish appearance which consists of a sword hanging on her waist with a gourd and a hairstyle for a widow.

Furthermore, she took the incense from the memorial tablet of Nobuhide and thrown it while angrily shouting "Father!" and left furiously after that.

As the eldest, Nobuna has the right to inherit the position of daimyo than Nobukatsu but this resulted to another problem.

"Oda clan will surely collapse if we let this princess inherit the family estate", said by Tsuchida Gozen that was still furious at Nobuna for messing up the funeral of her husband.

Nobuna's chief adviser, Grandfather Hirata had said that he was willing to prepare his own funeral to amend for what her lord had done but the new lord had left the place after hearing it.

And Nagahide followed after her.

She thought that Nobuna might have gone to the festival where the late Nobuhide had always brought her every year at Tsushima for sight-seeing.

And as Nagahide expected, Nobuna was there in the port of the river.

Every items and equipments were sprawled all over the place and some makiwara ships were washed away in the river.

Nobuna, with her mouth bend in a "へ" character, was glaring with teary eyes at the vast blue sky.

"So here you are Hime-sama"

"So it's Manchiyo, de aru ka"

"It's not "de aru ka" Hime-sama, what you have just done there was very improper, 0 pts"

"Hmph, it's just a waste of time; even if we held many more funerals, it won't bring father back"

"Even so, you must not make any more trouble, what would happen if the people that follow you turned against you Hime-sama?"

"Then how about you Manchiyo?"

"......Hime-sama. Looking at the sky is good and all but please don't directly look at the sun. It will blur your eyes"

"I know that, you don't have to say it"

"How about wearing the Namban black glasses?"

"Wearing glasses is not really my hobby"

Nobuna's tantrum has ended at that moment.

And she was also at her limits playing a brave front.

While showing a gentle smile in her face, Nagahide let Nobuna rest in her lap and when she was fully laid down in her lap, Nobuna started to cry.

"Hurting yourself is not good; your Otou-sama won't be happy seeing you like this you know? 0 pts"

Nagahide said this while gently stroking Nobuna's hair.

Ever since she served this obscure little princess that was younger than her, Nagahide have committed herself to understand the true heart of Nobuna.

The more she understands the loneliness of Nobuna, the more she gets frustrated that she doesn't have enough power to help her.

But she still stayed by her side.

Because this was the only thing she could do to support her.

"Perhaps this is my duty for now" this is what Nagahide had thought at that time.

In actuality, this role was originally for Tsuchida Gozen as her mother.

Or this should be the case.

But strangely, Tsuchida Gozen had rejected Nobuna.

And this was already happening ever since Nobuna was a child.

“When we learned that the Namban missionary had died, Hime-sama was also hurting herself like this.”

“…… Dearuka.”

“In times like this, please let me pamper you; it’s not good to hurt yourself, I’m sure Hirate-dono would surely say the same thing.”

“Grandfather Hirata, won’t die right?”

“Hime-sama....”

“…… Manchiyo, all the people that I loved have all died. Those people who are willing to understand and believe me died one by one.”

After losing that Namban missionary, one of the few people that understood Nobuna, her loving father Nobuhide died too; a deep despair and loneliness that a normal person couldn’t bear was invading her, this is what Nagahide felt.

Someday.

Someday, will there be a someone who could truly understand this girl with a petite body that has a hidden huge dream? Nagahide wondered when that day would come.

“I don’t believe what Hime-sama has said, it’s too unreasonable, so don’t think it that way okay? Hime-sama.”

Nagahide gently raised Nobuna and held her in her tight embrace.

“Please Manchiyo, stay away from me or I might give you some misfortune, it’s better to be not too close to me. ”

“It was just a coincidence.”

“No it’s not! Look at my mother who despise me, she is very healthy~!”

“Hime-sama, you must not say a word that hurts yourself”

“Manchiyo too, you will also die!”

"I will never leave your side Hime-sama"

At that time, Nagahide have resolved herself that until that "someone" appears, she will stay by the side of the princess.

"And fortunately, I am a fool. So I'm sorry, but I will never leave your side Hime-sama, and don't worry, I won't die before Hime-sama does, 50pts."

With bright red eyes and a messy face, Nobuna gave a hug at her.

"Hime-sama, following the burning in Kyo, Matsunaga Hisahide of Yamato had led a rebellion against us"

"What should we do?"

Nagahide had returned to reality from her reminiscencing by the loud voices of her retainers.

Because she's a fool, she coudn't understand Nobuna's dream.

However, she could read the hearts of the people around her.

That's why she could tell that Matsunaga Hisahide had her reasons why she needed to revolt and picked this timing to do it.

Nagahide was vaguely able to tell the intention of why Hisahide did this.

"Quickly, all forces march to Kyo"

Nagahide had stood up slowly.

"Perhaps with this, the scattered retainers of the Oda clan will be able to unite together again, but taking into account the feelings of Hime-sama, this is only 50 pts."

Nagahide's retainers couldn't understand what was the meaning behind the words of their lord was.

While they are thinking why their lord only graded this incident by 50 pts, they bent their heads like that of a "P" character and were wondering whether it was good or bad.

"Losing something will surely make her strong but the question is how to fill the void in her heart, and right now she is in a very unstable condition and it might

overflow. At this moment, Hime-sama was having a hard time”

Kaga

Shibata Katsuie who was leading the Hokuriku district troops from Echizen was now in the neighboring country Kaga and was going to Daishoji Castle where the Uesugi army was based.

There were 3 countries between and before Echizen and Echigo, and those were Kaga, Etchuu and Noto.

Depending on who will win, either Shibata Katsuie or Uesugi Kenshin, they would be able to have these 3 countries by themselves and this would greatly affect the flow of the warring state period in their favor.

While Uesugi Kenshin was battling Takeda Shingen at Kawanakajima, at that moment Katsuie had marched out in Echizen. There was a truce between the Oda clan and Takeda Shingen for this event.

But Ashikaga Yoshiaki had interfered and became the mediator between Takeda and Uesugi and thus the battle had ceased and they reconciled.

Because of this, Uesugi Kenshin had barricaded all the possible escape routes to Echizen for Katsuie and her troops to retreat.

And Uesugi Kenshin was leading her Echigo army in lightning fast pace to invade Kaga.

And currently, the Uesugi army has made Daishoji castle their base and was waiting for Katsuie's troops for a decisive battle.

Katsuie had steeled herself not to siege Daishoji castle recklessly and would only do it if there is chance and she was even willing to wait even if it takes years for that, and if by chance that opportunity came, the Hokuriku district troops anxieties might vanish, while thinking that , Katsuie was gobbling her onigiri.

And of course, with miso in it.

The people of Owari in the Warring State period like it that way.

Katsuie said that this food that contains miso in it was an excellent food in the battlefield diet.

The trinity of the rice, salt and miso is just the best.

If it's said in the modern day, it's calories, salt and protein.

And she could eat the whole onigiri in one bite.

However.

"Wh- what? Matsunaga Hisahide of Yamato had revolted against Hime-sama?"

"……..This is the second time she did this"

"Wh- why did this happen!? What will happen to Hime-samaaaaa!?"

Maeda Inuchiyo had reported the "revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide", while muttering "I want to eat some rice cakes……" with tear-filled eyes to Katsuie.

"Let's march back to Kyo and help Hime-sama quickly , Inu!"

".....But"

"Huh? What's wrong?"

"…… The Uesugi army is just in front of us here, if we retreat now, Katsuie will be labeled as a deserter and your reputation might get ruined"

For Katsuie who was known as a brave general, being labeled as a deserter would haunt her for a lifetime.

Furthermore, the enemy in front of her was known as the "God of War", Uesugi Kenshin.

She won't let herself retreat that easily without a fight occurring between them.

"Huh, even though I want to help Hime-sama, I don't even know how to get out of this place, I'm not that good at thinking!"

Katsuie shared her onigiri reluctantly to Maeda Inuchiyo who was muttering "I'm hungry".

"Inu, eat this"

"..... *MUNCH* ....."

"Sorry, I don't have any rice cakes here"

".....Those words, it kind of reminds me of Ojii-sama"

"Oh, the Chief Adviser? How nostalgic, it really did feels like it's a long time ago."

Nobuna's father, the Daimyō Oda Nobuhide of Owari had continued to fight Imagawa Yoshimoto of the East and Saito Dousan of the North, and even though he kept losing battle after battle, because of his unyielding heart, he was feared at that time.

However, he was still young when he suddenly got ill, and even when he received many treatments and prayers , he eventually still died.

According to one theory, the cause of his death was eating too much miso. The salt that came from his favorite miso had accumulated in his body and had triggered his blood pressure to rise and because of this, some of his blood vessels in his brain were getting clogged and while this was happening he made some " Uh!,oh!,Uhh!" sounds, and eventually resulted to a stroke and his death.

Being the successor and labeled the “Fool Princess”, Nobuna in a foolish appearance had barged at the funeral and took the incense from the memorial tablet of Nobuhide and sprawled all of the contents and it shocked all the retainers that were present that day.

It was said that the Princess was so angry that time that she attempted to kill all monks that offered a prayers of healing to Nobuhide.

“It is the end for Oda Clan of Owari” this was the talk of the town folks.

Because of this rumors, some of the retainers advised that the second child, Nobukatsu-sama (And at present is called Nobusumi) should succeed the position.

At that time, Katsuie was still the chief retainer of Nobukatsu.

But even at that time, Katsuie’s loyalty laid only at Nobuna.

If this continues, the princess’ position would be in danger.

But at that time, the grandfather-like figure to Nobuna and Inuchiyo, Chief adviser Grandfather Hirate was there.

And because of Katsuie and Grandfather Hirate's persuasion, the retainers that supported Nobukatsu have stopped advising this and Nobuna's position as the lord was saved.

However, Katsuie was not good at things that uses the brain and was only good at eating like Inuchiyo but much faster than her.

So with his withered body that you won't be surprised if it collapsed suddenly, Grandfather Hirate who had sworn loyalty to Nobuna, was the one who almost did all the persuasion.

At that moment, Nobuna who just lost his father was in a daze so she wasn't able to do a thing back then.

Then one day.

Grandfather Hirate suddenly called Katsuie and Inuchiyo to an old Tea room and asked them to assist him in his seppuku.

"I will, commit seppuku so that to amend for the " Foolish act" Hime-sama have done, in that Man's funera-, *COUGH*"

Katsuie was in a panic.

'Sto- sto- stop it! Chief adviser!"

"No, I won't stop, Gonroku"

"Call me Riku!"

Katsuie involuntarily smacked Grandfather Hirate and had let out a "Guha!" sound, and Granfather was almost taken to heaven.

"Guhhaa!!, Granny? Its Granny, am I in the river of Styx?....."

Thump.

"Ah! Sorry Chief adviser, please don't die!!"

"…… Katsuie killed Jii-sama"

"Ah! i- it's my fault!?"

"…… Wait a minute~! Inu! Let's forget about the funeral for now, if the news that the Gonroku have beaten an old man to death it would be an outrageous scandal! Uh, uhh *SOB*"

"……Jii-sama is still alive"

"Uwaaaaaa~~! Good grief, Chief adviser is still alive~! "

While coughing, grandfather Hirate got up and narrowly escaped death for now and tried to persuade Inuchiyo and Katsuie why he wanted to do this.

"Listen, Gonroku and Puppy, I can't blame Hime-sama for being irrational right now, losing his loving father in such a young age, I know the feeling very well. However, if this continues the Oda clan will be dividing to factions."

"Didn't I say call me Riku~~! *SOB*"

"…… So that's why you want to commit Seppuku?"

"That's right, if it's me her adviser who have been together with Hime-sama ever since she was born, will have a funeral, she will surely stop her foolish acts.

Hime-sama is truly a sweet child; she will certainly listen to this old man's last wish"

It was a good story but the ending was way too tragic.

"I already have a terminal illness because of my age, my days in this world is already nearing its end but being able to offer this body of mine for Hime-sama, I'm truly happy"

However, the usual deadpan Inuchiyo strongly opposed by saying "No~~!" with eyes bright red.

"NO! NO~! NO~~! If Hime-sama heard that you committed Seppuku-!'

Inuchiyo didn't continued what she was saying. No, she couldn't continue it because she was crying too hard. "Uh! Uhh~! Uuhhh~~! Uwaaa~~!" her wail could be heard outside of the Tea room.

Her emotion burst out and she repeatedly said "NO! NO~! NO~~!" like that of a child that was throwing a tantrum.

So Katsuie was the only one who could convince him to stop.

Persuading others was not Katsuie's forte, as it was proven last time. But she had no choice; she needed to convince that old man to stop.

"Sh- she is right! You mustn't do it! Of all the people here you should know it very well Chief Adviser; you're just going to hurt Hime-sama even more, so please don't do it!"

"Ahh, Gonroku, you"

"If someone like you who is precious to Hime-sama, that she even look up as her Grandfather dies because of her, Hime-sama's heart surely won't be able to bear it and it would leave a scar for the rest of her life~!"

"……I see Gonroku"

"Even if Hime-sama does straighten her act, surely one day her emotion will overflow and it will happen again, she doesn't need to see you at your funeral~! What she needs is you being by her side~!"

"I have always thought that you are just a brute warrior with a cow-like breast…… but I didn't knew that you could read Hime-sama's heart that I should have been able to do too"

"Even I don't know the world Hime-sama is talking about. But she is not a fool! I just said it myself that Hime-sama had just lost her father, what would she think if the Chief adviser who was there for her ever since she's born, the one that she looks up as her grandfather also died, I don't know what she will feel about this, Hime-sama will surely-"

"Gonroku is absolutely right, because of my old age I get confused so easily these days"

"I said call me Riku~!"

BANG!

"GUHAA~! Will you stop that Gonroku? If this continues I'll really die!"

"If chief adviser just called me Riku, this would have been finished already!"

"Is that so? I'm really getting old to forget about that. *COUGH*"

"Grandpa, please don't die ok?.....I'm hungry"

"Hey, will you stop crying already!"

"Puppy, I don't have any rice cakes but I have rice balls, come here and eat it"

"……*MUNCH*"

"Good thing you like it, but I kind of feel bad because it's not a rice cake"

Because of Katsuie and Inuchiyo's strong objection, Grandfather Hirate had cancelled his own funeral.

After that, the terminal illness of Grandfather Hirate had progressed, and he eventually retired. In his sickbed in Shirotaku he was watched by Nobuna, Katsuie and Inuchiyo, and his relative, and after that Grandfather Hirate peacefully passed away.

It was a pleasant death.

Even without committing seppuku, Grandfather Hirate's concern was conveyed to Nobuna.

And after Grandfather Hirate's death, Nobuna's foolish acts ceased.

"…… At that time, Katsuie was able to stop grandpa, even though you're a muscle head"

"Muscle head!? It's none of your business~!"

"And your boobs are too big"

"That's even more none of your business~~!"

"Frustrating, be cursed"

"Hmm? What do you mea- "

"…… You were able to save Hime-sama and grandpa, so thank you very much"

PEKORI Inuchiyo bowed while stuffing her mouth with onigiri to Katsuie.

"Stop that Inu, anyway if we just fight them once and lose, we have a valid reason to retreat"

"…… Losing, we will lose in purpose?"

"Even if my name gets tarnished, if it's for Hime-sama, I'll gladly do it."

"…… If that really happened, you might have problems in our clan in the future"

"I don't care. I only fight for Hime-sama's dream. I can 't face the chief adviser if I did things that opposed what I promised to him that day."

"…… Then …… Katsuie is"

"Uesugi Kenshin is known for her justice, if we escape tonight she will chase and annihilate us but if we fight her courageously, even if we are defeated and retreat, the god of war will surely give mercy to us and let us escape "

"…… Katsuie is never going to get married"

"Wh- wh- wh- why~~!"

"…… The way you live is way too awkward"

"It can't be helped~! I like Hime-sama~!"

"……Your only interested in girls?....."

"A- a- a- a- a- a- ar- ar- are you stupid~~! I didn't mean it in that way"

Katsuie and Inuchiyo, "Let's get defeated by the Uesugi army and retreat to Kyo shall we?" "…… Let's do that" have come to that decision.

Ise Inlands

The Kuki navy fleet had now reached the Kumano Beach that faces the Pacific Ocean.

The Kuki pirates' promised servitude to Takigawa Kazumasu had changed themselves and were now worthy to be called a "Naval Fleet".

And on the flagship deck, Takigawa Kazumasu and Kuki Onee-san were just lazily sun bathing while watching the schools of whale, and to add to it Kuki Onee-san was exposing her stomach and as per usual were not doing their works.

And both of them didn't want to go back to the land anymore.

“What a nice weather, this must be what they call “ clear blue sky”, isn’t that right Kuki~”

“Yes! Under this vast blue sky and this large sea, one can forget the worries that she is not in a marriageable age anymore~!”

“But I think you should be bothered about your marriage though, kusu kusu”

“But in our entire fleet, there is not even a single man around here~!”

“But we have, that fellow that came from Namban, the one with the stunning red hair. Giovanna-chan right?”

And apparently, that Giovanna that who knows when got in friendly terms with Kazumasu and her pirates was

in the deck doing some chores while eating some special delicacy of Ise, the Anko mochi.

"…… This Anko mochi is delicious, too delicious. It's so delicious that I can eat this forever *MUNCH** MUNCH**MUNCH*"

Ever since Giovanna came, the rations of the Kuki pirates were diminishing in a rapid rate.

"Hime-sama~! Even though she looks and acts like a man that person is a woman~!"

"Is that so~?"

"Yes it is~!"

"Then at this rate, if you can't find a man, why not just pick a woman~? Kusu kusu"

"Hime-sama, you're so cruel~! If this Kuki Yoshitaka, that is the Captain of the famed Kuki pirates would become so low to marry another woman, then I'm better off being a bait to the whales than to get married~!"

“I see, and here I was thinking that this cute princess will be Kuki~’s bride, but if you say it like that then I better give up now~”

“Ahh~! No, if it’s Hime-sama, it’s another matter, and if you want we can held the ceremony right now~!”

“Boss~~!!! Don’t monopolize Hime-sama for yourself~~!!!” these were the complaints of the girls of the Kuki pirates while dropping their works just to complain to their boss.

And at the same moment.

A pigeon has nested itself in the head of Kazumasu while gently landing.

“Mu? A carrier pigeon that has a letter for Hime-sama?”

“Oh, it’s not a letter from Frois-chan but from Orugan-chan[11] that accompanied her to Kyo. Is this a Love letter? Is it because he can’t take out this cute little princess from his mind that he sent a love letter to me?”

"No, he is the type of guy that just seeing a girl makes him scared so I think that's not the case here"

"But if he overcame his fear and started to love Hime-sama …… if that happens, tsk~"

"So what does it says"

"Yamoto's Hisashi~ had rebelled. Right now Nobuna-chan is in a pinch, that's what it says"

"Hime-sama, even though your good at giving pet names, isn't that nickname too forced?"

"Anyway, Hisashi~ or Matsunaga Danjo right now is a pain"

"What should we do? Shall we go back?

"kusu kusu. We already reached Kumano beach, it's already too late to go back"

"Yes it's already too late but if this continues, what will happen to the Oda Clan?"

"Umu …… If Nobuna-chan dies …… it's the end for the Oda clan"

"I will always follow Hime-sama until the end, and will obey whatever you decide"

The previous name of Kazumasu was Takigawa Sakon and was the daughter of the Koga ninja.

The house of Takigawa was one of the upper class among Koga ninjas and could be said to be the best among them because they were not just ordinary ninjas.

The Koga ninja was a kingdom itself and had a hidden fortress that was deep in the rugged mountains, and they had very few contacts with the outside world.

With the exception of when they receive a job as a ninja.

However, for Kasumazu, it was a place that only gave her anxiety and pressure when she was there in the Koga clan.

Even though they called her "Hime", for some reason, they kept their distance from her.

Was it because of the ability of Kazumasu?

Even the loving father that pampered the young Kasumazu, by the passage of time did the same and treated her like a child that is being kept just because of being asked by a friend.

And one faithful day, Kazumasu heard some rumors from the maid servants. “That child doesn’t have the blood of the house of Takigawa”.

After hearing the rumors, Kazumasu anxieties grew day by day, thinking that she might not be a member of the Koga clan.

And then followed an unexpected accident or perhaps an assassination, her father died but his body’s whereabouts were not found.

The young Kasumazu had fled from Koga after that.

And became a rogue ninja.

Or should have happened back then.

She blindly fled to the sea.

She wanted to know and see the vast sea and did not want to bother anything related to the Koga ninjas.

And at midnight, Kazumasu had fainted from hunger at the Tsushima port town of Owari.

On the river, there were countless lantern-carrying marikawa ships that were being washed away by the stream.

Just a little more and I could almost be able to ride that boat but my body won't listen to me anymore.

While the small drums beat, a beautiful maiden that was not from this world had appeared and walked to the place where Kazumasu lied.

And this maiden knelt down and helped the tattered Kazumasu to get up.

And this beautiful but sharp maiden, for some reason looked very lonely behind her smile.

"What's the matter? Are you lost, what's your name?"

"…… A rogue ninja of Koga, Takigawa Kazumasu"

Kazumasu knew that this maiden was not one of the ninjas who came to bring her back, this is what she understood.

Such eyes full of loneliness, Kazumasu didn't see this kind of eyes in the Koga clan.

"I see, you're so young for being a rogue ninja, you're really something that you were able to come here in Tsushima from where you come from"

The maiden caressed the cheeks of Kazumasu.

This was the first time in a long time that someone showed kindness to her.

Then Kazumasu started to cry.

"I, I don't have any place to call my home anymore"

"Why? You can go back to Koga right?"

"…… The sea, I wanted to see it"

"The sea? Why?"

"My …… position as the princess …… of the Koga clan is now gone. But if I go to the other end of the sea, perhaps maybe……"

The word that she wanted to say came to stop there.

And now she was embraced by the maiden and then she started to cry even louder.

"I beg of you, will you take me in, Hime-sama?"

The maiden whispered to Kazumasu "Me too, I don't have a place to go back too" and after that she made Kazumasu to stand.

"Then shall we go, Sakon"

"…… Where?"

"To Dance"

"Is there a festival tonight?"

"In my life, everyday is a festival, Sakon"

"Everyday ……"

When the maiden gave a bright smile, it was clear and refreshing, but more importantly, it was very beautiful.

For Kazumasu, this smile that the maiden showed to her.

And she have thought that she won't ever forget this smile for the rest of her life.

"From now on, let's be together forever, even in the other end of the sea"

"Hime-sama?"

"Oh my, I just reminisced something from the past"

"For someone so young, I don't think such bitter words suit you"

"Well, I just can't forget when Nobuna-chan said " please~, let's find a place to rest~♪" and that night we shared a passionate rest together. Kusu kusu"

"I'm so jealous~! Grrrr~~"

"Kuki~, even though Nobuna-chan is stingy and sucks at preparing tea, to me, she is like my Aneki so it's a given that we come to her aid if she is in a pinch"

Kuki Yoshitaka rolled up her sleeves.

"Then it's settled! But then again, it took quite some time before you decided, right! Let's go!"

"Well, I'm kinda at loss because if we go to her we will lose our leisurely trip. Kusu kusu"

"I can't get enough of that mischievous smile Haa~~ Haa~~, but If we don't hurry and go back to land from Ise. It will be too late for us to help"

"If we follow the sea route, we are now on Kumano beach of southern tip of Kishu. So let's sail to north and land in Sakai and then start to move from there."

"Yes ma'am! With the blow of the wind right now, this might work~!"

"Kumano beach has a strange flow of current, so Kuki ~ are you okay with that? Kusu kusu"

"For the Kuki pirates, no, for the Kuki navy fleet, the ocean is like our backyard so don't you worry about it Hime-sama!"

The fleet that was in front of Kumano beach had simultaneously steered their wheels.

While going north, Kazumasu remembered the promise she made with the maiden that she danced with in the night of the festival of Tsushima.

"I want to go with Hime-sama, no; I want to go with Nobuna-chan to the other side of the sea"

On the west bank of Lake Biwa, there was the Oumizo Castle that was being erected there.

The castle was surrounded with water making it a natural water fortress, and this architecture technique was learned by the wise Mitsuhide.

While at the bank looking at the vast lake Biwa, the master of Oumizo Castle, Tsuda Nobusumi was lost in thought.

Yamato's Matsunaga Hisahide had revolted.

And now, his sister Nobuna that was at Kyo, was in a dangerous situation.

For Nobuna who loved to raise arson, thinking that no one would rebel against her was a foolish way of thinking.

Even though he's weak, this was not the time to hesitate and he should go to Kyoto.

And he promised that his life was for Nobuna to use.

But still, he was a little anxious.

So he waited and watched the situation at first.

He wanted to be forgiven, but he wanted to stay here in Oumizu castle even for another day.

Because.

"Oichi's condition …… yesterday and even now is still pretty bad"

So.

Oichi or once called Asai Nagamasa, Nobusumi's first wife, had suddenly collapsed one day at midnight.

This morning, the doctor Manase Belchior had rushed there to look at Oichi's condition.

"Today and tomorrow are critical for her"

That's what Manase Belchior said.

Nobusumi was hoping to stay with her at least after she passed the critical stage.

Matsunaga Hisahide still had not sieged Honnou Temple, and instead she was wasting her time battling the armed monks in Nara.

Besides, if Hisahide really had sieged Honnou Temple, Nobusumi would already have received reports that " Nobuna is dead" by now.

I know that Aneue would be fine even if I'm late to assist her, but if I leave now, I don't know what would happen to Oichi.

"Huh? ..... What am I thinking, it's a given that there are no other options but to march and assist Aneue, but even though I say that"

And first of all, for Oichi and his sake, Nobuna bared the unpleasant title of "the demon that slain Nagamasa and made his skull into a cup and drank from it" for deceiving the country for their sake.

Oichi understood this too.

(That's right. It's not because I'm worried about Oichi's condition, it's just because I'm weak. Who was the one who gave us these blissful days? It was all because of Aneue. Who was the one that sacrificed herself so that we could enjoy this country and build our home, it's all thanks to Aneue right?)

I don't need to say good bye to Oichi, I'm just going to Kyo to help.

Nobusumi had decided.

He was going to climb up the castle and go to the bedroom of Oichi.

However.

Surprisingly, Oichi was at the hall, waiting for his return, no, she was seeing him off.

“Kanjuro, please immediately march to Kyo, this is not the time to worry about me, please help Aneue right now ”

“Wh- why are you here Oichi, you should be resting right now!”

“I’m sorry if I made you worried Kanjuro, but I’m fine, I don’t have any illness at all”

“Eh? You don’t have one? But you were just suffering the other day right?”

“Yes, but according to Doctor Manase Belchior, I’m in fact …… ”

And suddenly she fainted and Nobusumi was in panic , thinking about “the revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide” ” Oichi’s sickness” and “Nobuna’s dilemma”. It took some

time before he could “cool his head” in the bank of the lake.

“But he said that today and tomorrow are critical for you right?”

“Yes, it was a little dangerous but I overcame it”

“No, I think it’s really is an illness!”

“No, it’s not an illness”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying! Where is doctor Manase~!?”

“He left for a long journey because Matsunaga Danjo Hisahide had revolted”

“What!? I can’t understand a thing about this anymore ~!”

Oichi helped Nobusumi who was so confused right now and told him the results of Doctor Manase Belchior’s examination of what was happening in her body.

After hearing it, Nobusumi was like a someone who’s been struck by a lightning.

Is that so?

So that was it.

Now I get it!

“Aha ha ha, I’m, as usual, such a big fool, I actually thought that Aneue is going to be alright, why I …… why did I think something that stupid ……!”

“Is it because of this that you won’t leave our home, Kanjuro?”

“As if! I was going to your room to say good bye! Because I will immediately march to Kyo!”

“I see, I’m sorry if I didn’t cleared things up to you immediately”

“Oichi no, I’m the one who needs to apologize. I’m the one who was at loss because of this crisis, but I was also worried about your body Oichi ……”

Oichi then said “you’re such a kind man, that part of you is really the same as Aneue” with a wry smile.

"Kanjuro, don't worry too much here and go to Aneue's aid. Take care, my love"

"Ok, I'll be going then!"

There was a mountain fort located at the west side of Tamba.

Akechi Mitsuhide who continued to march toward Tamba to pacify it was at the base of Yakami Castle and was waiting for them to surrender.

There were many powerful nobles from different countries in Tamba.

Mitsuhide had persuaded all of these nobles one by one to ally with the Oda clan and with time, the nobles had come to their side one after another.

Of course, the world of the Warring States isn't kind enough to allow all the nobles of Tamba to be persuaded through just negotiations, eventually there would have to be a bloodshed.

So to not waste her time, Mitsuhide didn't pursue anymore those who refused to give deference to the Oda Clan.

To prove them that the era of the Oda clan is coming, Mitsuhide had confronted these nobles to make them understand this, even if it meant using force.

In military or diplomatic meetings, Mitsuhide was able to obtain victory in both of them.

And in this busy cycle, she was also able to supervise the construction of Oumizo castle where Nobusumi is the master.

Certainly, she was able to perform it all perfectly.

And the only one remaining to be siege was the renowned mountains fort of Tamba, Yamaki castle.

"If I could quickly pacify Tamba, then Sagara-senpai can happily marry me~"

Recently, this was the only thought that ran through the head of Mitsuhide who was full of vigor.

Although Mitsuhide only had a few troops with her, because of her silver tongue and intelligence, she was able to persuade the nobles of Tamba to ally with the Oda Clan and win wars in systematic ways and strategies without flaws and was now in a favorable situation.

However compared to Sagara Yoshiharu who was now in Harima and having a hard time, Mitsuhide was not having any problem at all in Tamba and was proceeding at a good pace. She was faster in pacifying this country than Yoshiharu who was struggling to do so.

One could say that this conquest was destined for Mitsuhide.

Yamaki castle was the worst type of enemy and was not surrendering even after a month had passed.

The casualties kept increasing, time was dragging and resentment was rising while days passed.

So the master of the Yamaki castle was encouraged by the others to surrender to the Oda clan.

Mitsuhide was favoured in high respect by the powerful nobles of Tamba.

And so they won't break the promise they made carelessly.

Even if there were problems in the nobles, once she used her silver tongue, they would always succumb to her offer.

"Now, if you do not serve the Oda Clan, you might lose your independence and have an income gap of 30 years. But if you join us now, your income will grow 3 folds compared to now, and you will be able to enter all you want to the Oda Clan's prestigious hot springs, but of course there will be funds taken worth 1 month for the use of the facilities. We also have retirement benefits, we will give you 1 cup of tea a day, because I don't mind doing that much. Now! Pledge loyalty to the Oda Clan and have a vast and happy future~!"

With such fast pace to give a long speech in such a short time, the nobles were twisting their neck and were saying "Umuu, it's kind of incomparable" and pledged deference to the clan clueless.

Of course, the reputation of the Akechi military troops was really good with the people.

And at long last, the master of Yamaki castle succumbed to her offer.

And with this, the pacification of Tamba was completed.

“Now that I have finally pacified Tamba, shall I go to Harima and aid Sempai? Well, even though Juubei doesn ’t want too, he IS my future husband so I think it’s better to assist him.”

Mitsuhide was in good spirits that day.

While she was at her base, she was humming "Now that I conquered Yamaki castle~ shall I go to Mount Atago and kill some time there~" in a highly competent way.

However, the bad news that “Yamoto’s Matsunaga Hisahide had revolted” came.

“Wh- what!?”

These rumors did not only spread in Mitsuhide's base but in the whole of Tamba too.

The Akechi troops were also anxious because of this.

But the one who was panicking the most was Mitsuhide.

Spraying the tea that was served to her from her mouth, she quickly stood up from her seat.

"Th-th- th- th- th- that's why~! I said to cut down that revolutionist while we had the chance No- No- No- No- Nobuna-samaaaaaa~~. N-no, it's that right? She was to- to- to- too kind to us……!"

But thinking those things right now was useless.

Thinking things out will be just waste of time.

Right now, she needs to withdraw out of Tamba.

"Qui- qui- qui- qui- quickly prepare the troops, we will mar- mar- mar march out of Ta- Ta- Ta- Tamba to help Nobuna-sama!"

However.

“But if we march out from the captured Yamaki Castle and leave the newly pacified Tamba”

“The powerful nobles of Tamba will raise their complaints”

“And we will do pacification all over again”

“And Yamaki Castle will restock and ready themselves and it would be impregnable the next time we return”

The retainers strongly opposed the idea and saying “ we must not withdraw out of Tamba!”.

“What are you talking about? You, who do you think is more important, the nobles of Tamba or Nobuna-sama! !”

“If it’s her, she will survive somehow”

“Yes! The princess of Oda has survived a deadly gunshot once; she will surely be able to overcome this crisis!”

"So to summarize this, we must not go to where Hime-sama is."

"And if we do it all over again, it will take some years to pacify Tamba again"

"And this might result in a problem for our Akechi Clan!"

"Why are you saying selfish thing like "this will be a problem for the Akechi Clan" you big fools!" Mitsuhide furiously chastised her retainers who were usually kind on a daily basis.

"Stop spitting out useless things, and ready the troops to march out!!"

"But!"

"If it takes some years before we pacify Tamba, what will happen about the talk of marrying Saru-dono?"

"It isn't going to be legal even in papers!"

"…… Aahh!!"

It worked.

For Mitsuhide who was blindly loyal to Nobuna, this was her only weakness and contradiction.

And it was Sagara Yoshiharu.

Mitsuhide once said “to eliminate the bad rumors surrounding Nobuna-sama, I’m letting Sempai marry this brilliant me” and had no doubt that these two were only in a master and servant relationship. And even though she already saw their tryst, she’s still gleefully saying to herself that “If Sempai and I get married~ we will live in our large love nest~”, her retainers that saw that their lord was acting weird could obviously tell her true intentions.

And so the retainers used this against the lavishly in love Mitsuhide.

Also, they were always reminded by the sick mother of Mitsuhide that “I want to see my daughter in a wedding dress and get married” repeatedly.

So now, the retainers of Mitsuhide were suddenly in a situation that they forged the “Hime-sama and Saru-dono must get married” pairing.

"Is that okay, Hime-sama!?"

"While we are pacifying Tamba again, Saru-dono might, no, will certainly find a wife in Harima!"

"And if its Harima were talking about, it will definitely be the Akashi"

"And if we're talking about Akashi, you'll remember the Octopus princess and the "Tale of Genji" where the Akashi is famous too!"

"That's the place where "Hikaru Genji" cheated!"

"The Akashi might use their octopus-like tentacles to seduce Saru-dono, Hime-sama!"

"If it's the Octopus princess, she'll definitely do it!"

"There is no mistake on that!"

No, maybe it might be the Oda clan princess…… "

For the first time, Mitsuhide flinched ever since this discussion started.

"Su-su- su- such an a- a- a- absurd thing~~"

She was in a state where she was shaking and might collapse at any moment.

“Sagara-sempai won’t get seduced by that Octopus princess even if she abducted him, but more importantly, if Sempai pursued his forbidden love for Nobuna-sama ……”

Mitsuhide wouldn’t get confused or puzzled in the matters in Tamba but if suddenly thrown with a question related to the “marriage with Yoshiharu”, she didn’t know what was right or wrong.

When it came to Yoshiharu, Mitsuhide couldn’t think calmly as usual.

(Please, tell me what to do, Sempai)

Then she remembered the words of Yoshiharu.

Once, when Matsunaga Hisahide did her first revolt, Mitsuhide stayed at Kyo because she was assigned to guard the place; she was in a situation full of despair and confusion back then.

With just a few people, Nobuna and Yoshiharu rushed to Kiyumizu temple just to help her.

At that time, Yoshiharu saved her, and he said it with a heavy voice with a face full of sadness that Mitsuhide would never forget.

“If you ever find yourself uncertain in the future, remember this image of the bloody love triangle that happens in this burning Kiyumizu temple! And how Nobuna appeared in a hideous appearance and fired her Tanegashima earnestly just to stop this bloody love triangle to kill you!”

“Huh~? Wait its kinda wrong! My memories got altered~! But first of all, somehow in my head Sempai blurted another word from the future~”

“Oh my god! Hime-sama’s one man show has started~!”

“Your right~ Hime-sama, take care”

“I’m just tired because of work~!”

“Wait~! The right memories just came in~”

What is this “love triangle”?

“If you ever find yourself uncertain in the future, remember this image of the bloody battle that happened in this burning Kiyumizu temple! And how Nobuna appeared and fired her Tanegashima earnestly to stop this bloody battle to save you …… !”

Yes.

The one who saved her from being attacked by Matsunaga Hisahide were Nobuna and Yoshiharu who rushed to Kiyumizu temple with only just a few people to save her.

And now, Nobuna is in a crisis because of the “revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide”.

Now she wasn’t lost anymore.

Nobuna, who sometimes smacks Mitsuhide, had once shown her true self to her.

This was when they were at Odawara and snuck into the camp of Date Masamune when they heard that Yoshiharu died and were going take revenge for him.

"Humans, will always be honest when they've lost someone, now that I think about it, we were always quarrelling right?"

"…… I may be blessed with splendid retainers, but I had thought that Viper's dream and my dream can only be succeeded by Juubei"

Nobuna's other self.

Two people were looking at the same dream.

Surely

When Nobuna dies, that will also mean the end for Mitsuhide's life.

The distance between the two of them, as well as their soul, was that close.

So close that they fell for the same man.

But, Mitsuhide didn't perceive her love and didn't try to understand Nobuna's romance.

Because if she learned this, it's going to have an irreversible result.

Just a little bit more…

Just a little bit more, I want this relationship to continue.

So, Mitsuhide made a decision to remain unaware of it .

Once she noticed this, the fear that those souls would make different decision invaded her.

“It is very regrettable that we will discard the newly pacified Tamba that did not take too long to conquer.”

“So, Hime-sama, have you changed your mind?”

“Of course not~! I’m one of Nobuna-sama’s retainers, it’s a given that I must help her~!”

“No, well umm”

“But, what will happen with your marriage to Saru-dono ……?”

“Such a thing can just wait; and Tamba won’t go anywhere too!”

"Oohhh~~!!"

"The Hime-sama who always gets panicked when we bring up the "marriage with Saru-dono", was able regain her cool"

"Is this really okay……?"

"I kind of feel that something is wrong here……"

Mitsuhide snorted "Fuuun" while riding her horse.

"If Saru-sempai can't wait for me to pacify Tamba, he can just have Octopus princess of Akashi, Men! March toward Kyo!!"

At that time, the cold wind toward the stronghold of Mitsuhide had been blown down from the summit of Yamaki castle.

And all the banner of bell flower crest was fluttering in the wind.

Akechi Mitsuhide had left Tamba and had marched to Kyoto.

"Hihihi, what a pain, the Mori army surrounded us in all direction; they're more superior in number than us, Hihihi"

"Granny-sama! Can you use that "Art of War" of yours to get us out of this mess!?"

"Hihihi, That's impossible, I can think a plan or 2 if we were in a castle but it's a different story if we are in the field"

"My apologies, the Mori army came earlier than expected, it is my fault for forgetting to gather information beforehand"

"No no, this is the limit of us Oumiyoji's, and the art of war has changed now, it's not the same as back in my time"

Yamanaka Shikanosuke who had led the feint troop, was able to read the movements of the enemies, and thanks to the effort of Granny Aga who gave directions

and pointers to her, they were in a favorable situation, and successfully attracted the Ukita army to the west side of Yumesakigawa.

Shikanosuke had led 3000 troops, consisting of the Amago Heroes and Kuroda Clan's retainers.

There were approximately 5000 troops that were still left in Miki Castle to guard it and were deemed untouchable.

On the other hand, Ukita's armies who have gone down the mountains to catch Shinkanosuke numbered at 9000 troops.

This 90% larger Ukita army had flooded forward to the 3000 troops of Shinkanosuke.

Shinkanosuke was once a reckless warrior who went to the battlefield and didn't even know when to retreat, but after she was trained by Granny Aga and learned the art of war, she had now become a Miracle warrior in the battlefield. She could now perceive the enemy's strategies and gave good orders at crucial times.

However, she couldn't possibly learn it all in just 3 days; so Granny Aga became the strategist to prevent Shinkanosuke from running wild in battlefield.

Both of them splendidly stalled the Ukita army and let Yoshiharu and Zenki sneak to Mt. Shozan.

Along with Ashikaga Yoshiaki, the elites of Mori, the Mori twins have personally led the Mori army and came in a much earlier time than expected.

Though not too sure, Granny Aga estimated that their total troops were overwhelmingly around 40000.

In the left wing, there were more than 20000 troops that were being led by Kobayakawa Takakage.

And in the right wing, there was Yoshikawa Motoharu who led the more or less 20000 troops.

And if the Ukita Army is added, it would be a large army of 50000 troops, and was now marching in the plains of Himeji; this is the largest army ever seen in the history of Harima.

Shinkanosuke has thought that the Mori Army needed some time to stock their ration and weapons because of their numbers, therefore she was convinced that they would be late to arrive.

But, there was a champion in the Mori's naval fleet that was known in the Seto inland sea.

While the foot soldiers marched on land, the provisions were deployed from the sea.

"Please retreat Granny-sama! While My Lord is saving Kanbei-dono, I'll stall them here as much as possible!"

"Well, Zenki has already left and gone to heaven, so until the end, I'll just stick as "the loyal retainer" for a while. Hihihi"

"Zenki-dono is already dead?"

"That guy is a big shot you see, so knowing when he breathed his last would be simple, but even though he is already in heaven, he could still do some tricks. I can only say one thing about it, he is truly remarkable."

"Then that means My Lord is …… "

Shinkanosuke was grinding her teeth as she say “no… ”.

“Hey~~!!”

In the field full of enemies, there was one man who was able to push forward from it.

“Shinkanosuke~! Granny~! Kanbei is safe now~!”

The one riding on the horse was Sagara Yoshiharu.

And he was even carrying Kanbei on his back.

Even though they saw this suspicious monkey who was going to Shinkanosuke’s side, the Mori army didn’t even lift a finger against Sagara Yoshiharu and let him pass.

They didn’t even think that the renowned general “ Sagara Yoshiharu” was this man.

Shikanosuke was flabbergasted.

“Wh- …… why did you come here my lord?”

"What do mean "why?", because Shikanosuke is in trouble, that's why I'm here"

"My Lord is really~, a big idiot~! We were just planning to stall the Mori army so that you can have some more time you know? And now we just saved Kambei-dono~! What's the point of all of this if you too get stranded at the rear~!"

"I did not come here to die you know. Now, leave it to me"

"Then, do you have a plan!?"

"…… I'm working on it"

"No you're not!"

When they saw that Kanbei was safe, the Kuroda retainers were shouting "Hime-samaaaaa!!""Sagara Yoshiharu is, is~, is a real man~~!!""Wait……..!! Why did you bring Hime-sama into this death pit, you stupid MONKEYYYYYYY~~!!!" They were busy being happy, angry, and depressed at the same time.

"…… We don't have spare time to retort to them"

Just as Kanbei said.

The Mori clan was moving as they spoke.

Furthermore.

“Uhihihihihi, don’t forget that the Mori army is coming here, and if they arrive here, they’ll definitely capture Yamanaka Shikanosuke with all they’ve got”

With a fierce face, Ukita Naoie was in the frontline holding his short tanegashima and did not rush toward Yoshiharu and the others.

He was like a different person compared to moments ago who kept saying that “It’s my loss~~!!” and now had a villainous smile on his face.

“Wait a minute~! Ukita Naoie you bastard~! Didn’t we just have an agreement a little while ago~!!”

“Hu~h, what are you talking about, the great me won’ t sulk just because I lost once, but I’m the kind of man who doesn’t dwell on yesterday’s mistakes and will look forward to tomorrow~!”

“It’s not from yesterday, it’s just a little while ago~~!!”

"Shut up!! The Mori army is already here and if I ever did what you said then I'm as good as dead! Well, if the Oda gave you reinforcement and the tides were in your side, I would have considered it though~"

Kanbei said "Sunekusori!" in a loud voice, and Sunekusori came out with "pyyoonn" sound and attacked Ukita Naoie in a huge flying squirrel form.

"Give up already, and die for me will ya? Sagara Yoshiharu …… Wha-!?"

"Touching man is not my hobby nyu~ but I'll do my best nyu~ touch touch touch"

"Som- something is …… stuck in my chest~! Sto-stop! Stop it~~! Hya hya hya hya hya!!"

Sunekusori had dropped to Naoie's chest, and was now tickling him without stopping.

Stop~! Don't make me laugh~~! If the Mori saw me laughing like this~ ..... they might get the wrong idea that I'm letting you guys free~~!! Gee hya hya hya hya hya!!"

Naoie was now unable to aim his small tanegashima and was shaking in his horseback.

“Oohhh~~!!”

And now he just fell.

This was the second time he fell on this day.

“Giyyaaa~~!!My waist …… Oh my waist~~!!! What will happen to the women of my country if my precious waist is~~!!! Giyyaaa!!!”

He fell hard on the ground and looked like he was in extreme pain.

But it still doesn’t change the fact that Yoshiharu was surrounded by an army of 50000 troops from the Mori Clan.

“My Lord, we the Amago heroes will open a path and cover you from the rear, please flee with Kanbei-dono”

“Is it a bad idea that I rendezvous with Shikanosuke? …… and here I thought I was thinking calmly”

“Sim, it was a bad idea, but yeah. That’s just like you”

"Even though I trained you hard, humans always do what they're used to doing, you guys really failed as my disciples, hihihihi"

"I'll stall the Yoshikawa and Kobayakawa army as much as possible, please leave the rear to me. My Lord, may the good fortune follow you……! "

At this time and moment, in the west bank of the Yumesakigawa, the luck of the Sagara corps had seemed to be depleted.

No, that's not it. That was not the case for Yoshiharu and Kanbei; they believed it from the bottom of their heart.

If they stall for some more time, they could surely protect Shikanosuke, they will definitely come.

"We're just in time! Men!! Cross to the other side of Yumesakigawa and prepare yourself for a decisive battle against the Mori army!! "

Just like that back in Owari, the fool figure Oda Nobuna came.

With a gorgeous armor, she led a large army in the east bank of Yumesakigawa.

And in the right side of Nobuna, there was the bellflower crest in a hill.

“What in the world are you doing, seriously, Sagara-sempai always gives us a headache, but don’t worry, Akechi Mitsuhide is here now”

It was the bellflower crest of Akechi Mitsuhide.

Furthermore

“Shi- Shibata Katsuie has come, from Kaga, and was defeated by Uesugi Ke-Kenshin, it was on purpose okay~~~! It was on purpose~~”

“…… We were seriously running away …… The Uesugi army …… Are so scary …… I thought we were gonna die back then”

“It was on purpose~~!! Damn you Saru~~! It was your fault, I’ll make you pay for this~~!”

The two who purposely(?) lost their battle and had arrows stuck in their tiger hat and armor, such that they looked like a hedgehog, were Maeda Inuchiyo and Shibata Katsuie.

"Everyone simultaneously rushed to Kyoto to save Hime-sama but we did not expect to take this to our advantage, and together with Hime-sama, we marched to Harima to give some reinforcements, which we didn't have much of a choice cause it was inevitable. With this, Oda clan is now able to have a reunion in a long time, 90 pts. "

Niwa Nagahide said with a smile.

"Why not make it a full points~! A ha ha ha~~"

"Well, if we lose here in Harima, it's all over for the Oda Clan"

"Then look at Aneue, she is overflowing with energy, we couldn't possibly lose~!"

Tsuda Nobusumi.

He had miraculously rendezvous with Nobuna and gone to Harima to help Yoshiharu. With this, all the power house of Oda clan was here.

Now, the Mori army was shocked and the tables were turned.

"Over there, they have 50000 troops, and here we also have 50000. No, 60000 troops, but are we already going to battle? Dust will fall to my skin; I really hate it when that happens"

Takigawa Kazumasu troops who suddenly appeared from south of the Mori army without crossing Yumesakigara came in the flank of the Mori army.

When the Kuki naval fleet that was being led by Takigawa Kazumazu landed to Sakai from Kii by sea, Imai Sokyu said "Hime-sama has already neutralized the revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide of Yamato and is now marching to Harima at this moment" and so continued their sail and were now going towards Harima.

Fortunately, the wind had blown good that Kazumasu was able to catch up to the Oda army.

In the Mori clan, they had great confidence for their naval fleet that was a known pirate in Seto inlands.

And in comparison, the Oda clan was not good in expanding their water territory; yes, their navy fleet had little achievement so they underestimated them.

So they did not expect that Kazumazu that was in Kii, to navigate and arrive here early with a large navy fleet.

Kazumasu who was known as a lord that was semi-independent, that didn't work for the Oda clan but would only move if ordered. So the Oda clan was really fortunate that she moved by her whim.

And there was another problem for the Mori clan, in these plains where the Mori army was surrounded and stopped, even if she's advised to not come by the Mori twins, Ashikaga Yoshiaki who said "I want to go too~~!" was also in the battlefield.

If the young Ashikaga Yoshiaki was not here, the calm Kobayakawa Takakage might have wanted to have their final bout with the Oda army as is.

However, they must not let the young shogun to die here.

Takigawa Kazumasu who has used a shortcut using the sea to come in Yumesakigawa and the Oda army who had come by foot to come to Yumesakigawa, now the Mori army was trapped between the two. Kobayakawa Takakage didn't expect this to happen.

Takigawa Kazumasu who came by the sea, didn't need to bother crossing Yumesakigawa.

And she came out from the flank of the Mori army.

But they were still fortunate because this was not a surprise attack.

But if Takigawa Kazumasu's troops attacked the flank of the Mori army, they will surely collapse.

"And to think that the scattered Oda clan came to Harima all at once …… this should have taken a month to do so"

Takakage Kobayakawa had stopped her mouth when she heard "Attack~~!!" Yoshikawa Motoharu yelled in her horseback.

"Onee-sama, please stop. Retreat to the west with your men, let's rebuild the situation where we can attain victory"

"Takakage, don't falter, our military forces are almost just the same as them."

"I too am reluctant about this, I had already prepared a plan if they ever have reinforcements, but I didn't expected for the Oda army to send 50000 troops and to sum it up Takigawa Kazumasu also arrived in Yumesakigawa and now the situation looks too grim for us and our chances to win are way too slim, so we better retreat for now, it's a shame but we could not catch the big fish of Harima"

"Uuhhh, how mortifying"

"Onee-sama, this is my mistake because I underestimated the unity of the Oda clan, The Oda clan is much stronger than I expected, and I concluded that they are not strong willed. However-"

"The bonds between retainers should not be overlooked. They should have been scattered in Hokuriku, Wakasa, Ise, Tamba and Omi but in such a short amount of time, they were able to gather together to march to Harima. An amazing speed that is contrary to common sense.

"Yes, the bonds of the retainers and that strange marching speed, especially the naval fleet. If we don't do something about these two, then in decisive battles there

will always be a gamble, we must not expose this to the young shogun”

Yoshiaki said “why should we retreat~! Nobuna is right in front of us~! Let’s defeat her now~!” with an angered expression but Takakage didn’t even flinched and stayed expressionless as usual.

It was admirable that she could still stay calm in this crisis they were facing.

“This is something that I didn’t expect, at this rate, we will surely lose so let’s strategically retreat and make a plan to win”.

“We did not lose right?”

“Yes, we will just retreat strategically for now, the Oda army is scared of us so they will not pursue us”

“But if they gave us chase?”

“If that happens, Onee-sama will lead her troop to annihilate the pursuing troops while guarding us from the rear; she will cut them down for sure”

Ou~! If the Oda clan blindly underestimate us, this Yoshikawa Motoharu will definitely cut them down~! Ohh~!”

While shouting “Princess Cut~~!” Motoharu took out her short sword and Yoshiaki squealed “Hhhiiii!” and got scared.

When they received the report that Ukita Naoie had hurt his waist because he fell from his horse. Kobayakawa Takakage frowned and said “he is a cunning man as ever” and taking this to account, the favor now lies with the Oda clan.

“Order Ukita Naoie to retreat his men and go back in his base, while we will withdraw from Mt. Shozan to go west and cross Ibo River and take refuge in Kozuki castle ”

She ordered the whole of the Mori army.

And the rout of Harima had now with only a brief standoff of armies concluded its first act.

Of course, in the head of Kobayakawa Takakage, she had already strategized a new plan.

"Sister, the sea is in our favor, let's go and fight the naval fleet of Oda with our own naval fleet."

"Then, you're finally mobilizing the Murakami naval fleet, Takakage?"

"If this war takes some time, in that kind of war, systematic strategy is important, so that's why we will take the sea because the Seto inland group will surely win, and to take back Miki castle, we must first take down the naval fleet of Oda that has landed to Harima"

"Right, the Seto inland pirates, Murakami naval fleet are indeed invincible"

"But there is one problem, the Oda army won't just stand and wait, they might attack us from the back while we are doing it"

"It seems that Matsunaga Hisahide who had led a rebellion in the Oda clan by the letter of Shogun-sama has now fallen"

"That event, even though it's not planned, was a greatfavor to us, Onee-sama"

"Leave it to Ashikaga Yoshiaki~ I will send a lot of letters to those who once served the Ashikaga~. Even though Matsunaga Hisahide is now dead, we still have many supporters~"

The young Ashikaga Yoshiaki was motivated and was making many "letter from the Shogun(?)" while thinking it's for the sake of reviving the Ashikaga clan.

Now that the young Yoshiaki had seen the Oda clan, she was burning with vigor to fight.

Since the Mori army retreated to Kozuki castle, Mt. Shozan and Himeji castle were now under control of the Oda clan.

The largest contributor, Granny Aga had not taken any reward at all, "The time of the Omyouji's has come to an end, so I don't need any of that, just say to Hanbei and Kanbei that I'm off now. Hihihihi" she said this and disappeared without a trace.

They say that she already followed Zenki in the other world.

Kuroda Kanbei was reunited to her father, Souen and the Kuroda retainers at Yumesakigawa.

“Ho ho~it seem that Takenaka Hanbei had saved our Shojoumaru” when Souen said this to Kanbei, the real truth about the command from Nobuna to cut down Shojomaru to Yoshiharu was also being revealed.

The truth that Konoe Sakihisa had a Fuma ninja planted to infiltrate her base and when she was sick, saw an opportunity and had given a false order.

Kanbei who from the very start didn’t suspect Nobuna , in Yumesakigawa, Nobuna hugged Kanbei and said “ When you were captured, I wasn’t able to move …… I’m sorry” while crying and did not let her go for some time.

Kanbei replied with a troubled face “if I enter an onsen , then I’ll be just fine, but though this is not bad once in a while” with teary eyes.

However, there was no time to chitchat because someone was in danger here in Harima.

It's not about Katsuie who kept saying "I did not lose to Kenshin at all~~!!" or Mitsuhide who said that "I may be back at square one in pacifying Tamba, but don't worry Sempai! We will definitely get married~!" and not also Nagahide who was in deep thought "As I thought, Matsunaga-dono did it for Hime-sama sake that's why … … she was an ideal retainer. Perfect pts" or Goemon who is whining "Unyaa~~!, the Kawanami group is chasing me~~!! They wanted to pat me cause I'm alive!!! Unnyyyaaaa! Don't come near me!!!" or not even Nobusumi who said to Yoshiharu "Hahahaha~~ I didn't see you for a while but you look much manlier now Saru-kun~~. Now you are one step closer to me~" innocently and also Shinkanosuke who "I wanted to honorably die in battle with the Mori" was talking to herself and Inuchiyo who said"…… I'm hungry" the shout of her soul. All of this was said in rapid succession while the retainers of the Oda clan were going back in full speed from Himeji to Miki castle.

That person is in Miki castle.

Every second counts.

In one corner of Miki castle, Takenaka Hanbei was sleeping, and when Nobuna and the others came back, she was already in death's doorstep.

But, ”Danjo-chan was such an amazing pharmacist, studying the art of longevity and was able to make one in just 3 years but just died like that, how regrettable” Doctor Manase Belchior suddenly appeared in Miki castle and was able to come in a nick of time to save Takenaka Hanbei.

“So everyone is here. Now, give the Ranjatai to me. Hurry~ hurry~”

If she took the Rajantai stolen by Goemon with Hisahide's help from Todai temple's Shosoin, Hanbei will recover and extend her life temporally.

Nobuna said to Yoshiharu, "This is the inheritance of Danjo, here." and threw the Rajantai over.

Manase Belchior cut a small piece of it, grind it into power and dissolves it in the water before pouring it into a black teacup prepared by Rikyuu.

“……”

Let her drink it right now, we can still make it and she'll wake up. Rikyuu said.

With Nobuna leading, the Oda clan members stood by the side as they observe Hanbei's sleeping face.

Kanbei said something about not letting them look at her crying face and started sobbing while covering her face with her namban hat.

"....Yeah, we finally made it!"

Nobuna relaxed and said.

"But Nobuna, how do we let her drink the Rajantai?"

"Ah, you got a point, Saru. We have to wake her up for her to drink it...."

"But Hanbei had exhausted all her strength and can't wake up."

There's no more time, right now every second counts. Manase Belchior urged them. "It's decided then.", Yoshiharu said.

"I will let her drink it with my mouth!"

"Dream on! You ero-saru!!!"

"Senpai, don't fool around!"

"Don't stop me! There's no longer any time left!"

"Sagara Yoshiharu, you can't do since you're a pervert. Let I Simon feed her with my mouth."

"Eh?"

"Before I swallow it all, I will feed it to her.... Uhh..."

"Ahhh....! What are you doing, Kanbei?! But a kissing scene between Hanbei and Kanbei!? This isn't so bad itself, a sudden event!!"

"In such a touching scene, Sagara-dono is still the same getting all horny like a monkey, 5 points."

"I'm not being horny, Nagahide, I'm just being touched !"

Kanbei had finish feeding the medicine.

Yoshiharu shouted, "HANBEI!!!" and rushed forwards. With a swoop, he hugged the small waist of Hanbei.

Those eyes that can't be opened originally gradually started to open.

".....Ah....Yo...Yoshiharu....san....!?"

"HANBEIIIII!!!"

The clear eyes of Hanbei is right in front of him.

Yoshiharu kept shouting with all his might.

His waves of tears can no longer distinguish between snot, tears or spit.

Hanbei hugged Yoshiharu back, but she did not shed any tears.

With a gentle smile, she looked at Yoshiharu.

"What's this? Won't this show that Hanbei is much more mature than me? Aren't the sobbing me the same as a child? I see, damn, this is the worst!"

"....Yoshiharu-san. You called me Hanbei directly just now."

"Ah, ahhh! I'm sorry, Hanbei-chan."

"No, I'm overjoyed, please call me Hanbei directly from now on."

Hanbei hugged Yoshiharu tightly.

Hanbei's body was no longer cold.

Such warmth.

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No, it's hot.

The heart is beating in high speed.

"To be hugged tightly like this by Yoshiharu-san, it's almost like a dream."

Yoshiharu had saved this smile.

Zenki, Shikanosuke, Kanbei, Nobuna, Goemon, Matsunaga Hisahide, Granny Aga, Ukita Naoie, Konishi Yakurou and Mitsuhide...

If anyone of them was missing, Hanbei could not have been saved.

Though her illness wasn't cured.

But as long as she's alive, we can find a way to cure it.

As long as she's alive...

"But.... I lied. I'm back now."

Slightly troubled, Hanbei smiled shyly. Yoshiharu caressed her head light and said.

"I'm sorry, Hanbei. Zenki disappeared due to protecting me. Matsunaga Hisahide became a traitor to get the Rajantai and had killed herself...."

The truth that was hardest to say, they must be told first.

Hanbei finally cried.

"....Uhh, if I had lived on, I'm really sorry."

"No, they will be happy if Hanbei survive."

"Hanbei, that thing about Shoyjomaru, I'm really sorry. "

Though Nobuna had lowered her head to Hanbei but in her heart, she knew how Hanbei will respond.

The strategist Takenaka Hanbei is one of the smartest person in the world.

The truth that Nobuna can never give such an order, she would have seen through it from the start.

Just from her intellect and her heart.

"Shojyomaru-chan was actually hidden by me in this army."

"Eh? Here?"

"If one was to hide a tree, he would hide it in a forest. * cough* Shojyomaru-chan, you can come out now."

"Yes."

She came out.

From under the namban bed that Hanbei was sleeping, Kanbei's younger sister, Shojyomaru appeared.

With a "Yosh~", she slipped out.

"Shojyomaru~~!"

Kanbei knocked away the obstructing Yoshiharu and hugged Shojyomaru tightly.

Since Yoshiharu had let go of Hanbei instantly, he was unable to dodge Kanbei's charge.

"Aneue!"

" Shojyomaru Shojyomaru Shojyomaru Shojyomaru Shojyomaru!"

"Aneue Aneue Aneue Aneue Aneue Aneue Aneue Aneue!"

Hanbei smiled awkwardly on the bed as she looked at the hugging sisters silently.

"....."

The head of Sagara Yoshiharu was knocked onto the namban table. Though Rikyuu was protesting silently, the current Kanbei did not care about all those right now.

While hugging Shojyomaru with one arm, Kanbei struck Hanbei's palm in celebration.

"Sagara Yoshiharu's head is bleeding, but it's not a bad idea for him to release some of his pent-up heat, 95 points."

"Correct Nagahide! Damn Saru, you deserve it!"

"Good, he's pitiful enough."

"....I'm hungry."

"I Shikanosuke want to meet my family too. But the battle with the Mori clan had just started, such suffering.. ."

Shikanosuke hugged Yoshiharu and said, "My lord, wake up!" "I will bandage you up." and then she tore up her shirt to bandage Yoshiharu's head.

"Well, it's just desserts for that Saru who use an aphrodisiac and tried to attack both Juubei and me.

That's all well and good... Anyway, that fellow hugging Saru, who the hell are you? Don't tell me you are the rumored....."

"Exactly, who is that woman? When did Senpai's camp have such a beauty? Don't tell me it's senpai's concubine? "

"Sorry for the late introduction. I'm the incarnation of suffering, Yamanaka Shikanosuke. I had devoted my body and heart to my lord. For my lord, I will not back down from the hardest ordeals! No matter what torture I receive, I will never betray my lord. Hahaha!"

"Dearuka, you've been fired."

"Why!? Ahh, what a dukkha."

Nobuna said with ice-cold eyes and a calm demeanor.

Still hugging Shojyomaru, Kanbei tugged on Nobuna's sleeve and said, "Simon had something to confess too."

"Eh? What is it, Harima?"

"I hope you will reconcile with Sagara Yoshiharu."

"I....I won't. It's another matter if Saru comes and apologize himself. He is a pervert who employ that woman with such a lewd figure, alright?"

Looks like I had been despised by Nobuna-sama without I knowing anything, what a dukkha. "My life is without any hint of sweetness." Shikanosuke said while nodding, while Yoshiharu hugged his head and said at the side, "The misunderstandings are getting out of control."

Though Nobuna had personally leaded reinforcements over to Yumesakigawa, she still seemed to be angry over what happened at the tea room.

By saving Hanbei together, I had thought that she could finally calm down. Who could have expected that she would start to get jealous over Shikanosuke?

I beg you Kanbei. Now that Hanbei had worken up, this is the best chance for Nobuna to reconcile with me. Yoshiharu prayed.

"Sagara Yoshiharu isn't a pervert. No, though he's a pervert, but he didn't cause the incident in the tea room."

"Then who is it?"

"The culprit who touched both of you is Sunekosuri who was possessing Yoshiharu. It's it who crawled into Yoshiharu's bosom and touched both of you."

"Sunekosuri?"

"It's an artificial spirit that I, Simon had created with Rikyuu-shisho."

Kanbei opened the bamboo container on her waist. From it, a fur ball organism peeked it's head out and looked at Nobuna.

".....I'm Sunekosuri, see see, I'm so cute."

Nobuna "Waaaa!" and.....

"So this fellow is the real pervert, huh!?"

"To actually dare do such a thing, I'm destroying you, I must destroy you!"

With Nobuna and Mitsuhide combining forces, Sunekosuri was driven out from the bamboo container and stomped on.

"You enemy of women, it's useless even if you act cute. Stomp you to death!"

"Ahhh, Sunekosuri! Ho....How can you be so cruel....!?"

Kanbei tried to stop the both of them, but their fury was still rising.

"Uwahh! Sunekosuri will be stomped flat!"

"Sunekosuri is a female, not a pervert. I just want to get close to people. Don't step on it.... No...!"

Being stomped flat, Sunekosuri begged. But the response of Nobuna and Mitsuhide are...

"Fe...Female? You're a female and yet you dare crawled into Saru's bosom? You bitch!"

"You had been getting close with Senpai and sniffing his scent, right!? So you think you can do whatever you want because you're an animal, huh? Go and die!"

"STOP, STOPPP!"

It just make things harder for itself.... Hanbei smiled helplessly.

What a dukkha, I'm so envious... Shikanosuke said while trembling.

"Nobuna, Juubei-chan, it's time to stop. If you want to vent your anger, vent it on my body then. Kick this kind me who was framed but did not argue at all."

"Then I shall grant you your wish! You just can't change that bad habit of being frivolous even when you're forced to a corner. I just can't believe you, you cheating bastard."

"Taking a big breasted beauty as your concubine behind your fiancée's back, I don't understand you at all, die!"

"Uwahhh? Shikanosuke isn't like that, it's a misunderstanding!"

Hoho, even Akechi Mitsuhide had lost her mind because of Yoshiharu, Kanbei smiled. Hanbei smiled too and replied, "Yeah, since Yoshiharu-san is so thick-skinned."

Though everything had come to an end, the current Oda clan had no time to organize a celebration feast.

Now, Nobuna had to start military meetings to prepare for the battles throughout the country, as well as the final battle with the Mori clan.

Everyone had left their posts to come here, we can't waste meaningless time here or else problems will arise. I must reposition each of their troops.

On the other hand.

"To recuperate Hanbei-chan's illness and Kanbei's legs, it's better for them to go to Arima for their hot springs."

Following Manase Belchior's suggestion, Hanbei and Kanbei were ordered to head towards Arima Onsen in the inner regions of Settsu's Mount Rokkou.

"Hanbei are you alright? Do you want me to send you to Arima?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Wait, Sagara Yoshiharu, why didn't you ask whether Simon is ok?"

"You're alright, right? Won't you be ok by soaking in the hot springs for a few days?"

"This is too biased! Looks like there's a need to finish things off one day."

Yoshiharu was uneasy and started immediately to prepare for a long journey.

"Goemon! Come together with us to Arima. When I'm gone, protect them properly.

"....Geez, can't you give me a day to rest. Using.... ninja. ... as he wants....."

From outside the tent comes Goemon's cold response.

"Mori won't be waiting obediently. We have to act ASAP.

"Ninnin, got it."

"My lord, Shikanosuke is going too. I will rub my lord's back in the onsen."

How thoughtful..... Wait a minute! I will be killed by Nobuna and Juubei! Yoshiharu noticed.

"I'm sorry Shikanosuke. Stay here to lead the Sagara corps. You are our troops second in command."

"....I'm getting the feeling of dukkha. But I'm happy that my lord trusts me."

After sending both of them to Arima, he will have to rush back to battle the Mori clan.

Goemon is safe, Hanbei and Kanbei had both returned to my side. Though the conditions were all fulfilled, the Incident at Honnouji did not happen, Nobuna and Juubei are as close as sisters. Bastard Zenki, you listen! I'm full of energy right now, to the point that I can't even sit down at all! Yoshiharu shouted.

With the help of our companions, we had finally surpassed the ordeals of Harima.

Shingen and Kenshin are both around. The battle with the enemy, the Mori clan is still ongoing, but the current Oda clan would never lose.

Mitsuhide and Katsuie were saying with a face of contempt, "Who you're calling? Are you in heat?" " Everytime I look at you, your face is becoming more like a monkey."

"Nobuna, just how long will the effect of Rajantai last?"

"It's ok to use all of the Rajantai on Hanbei. Bring it to Arima."

"Oi Nobuna, isn't that a little bad?"

"What's so bad about it, that Rajantai will forever be Danjo's."

For an instant, a hint of sadness flashed past Nobuna's eyes.

How I wish to hug her tightly to cheer her up right now.

But, Nobuna had become much stronger compared to the time we last met.

Very soon, she raised her head and shouted energetically, "It's time for the military meeting!"

To actually surpass the ordeal of the revolt of Matsunaga Hisahide alone and without me by her side, good job. Yoshiharu thought.

"Then I will move out with Hanbei and Kanbei then!"

Aren't you being too hasty, Senpai? Mitsuhide tried to stop him but Yoshiharu said, "Good things aren't worth waiting."

Yoshiharu entered his own tent and started preparations.

Now that Hanbei's body had become much better with the effect of the Rajantai, I have to send her to Arima right now.

At this moment...

Nobuna sneaked in by herself.

"Eh? Aren't you in the military meeting?"

"I said that I have a few things to think by myself and sneaked out."

She was with a face of displeasure as she pouted.

"I wanna reconcile with you... I will forgive you about that incident in the tea room."

"Geez, you just don't trust me at all. When I heard that you had ordered the execution of Shojyomaru, I trusted that you won't give such an order."

Yoshiharu feels, though it had been a long time since they were together alone, but being too obedient here would actually make Nobuna say that I'm a pervert, so I should just adopt a tough stance here.

In actual fact, he couldn't wait to rush up and hug Nobuna in his arms, consoling her "It can't be helped about Hisahide, you've done a good job." But Yoshiharu couldn't be honest.

Because if he had rushed over to hug her, he might just naturally push Nobuna down.

"Uhh, Uhhhhhh...."

Damn...

Nobuna is crying...!?

"I'm...I'm sorry, I said too much. I don't mean it that way."

"I'm wrong, I'm wrong, ok!? Because I had sent Yoshiharu to fight with the Mori clan on impulse. And letting Hanbei suffer quite alot in Harima too... It's all because I'm so impulsive! I'm sorry!"

"Eh? You are actually.... apologizing?"

Yoshiharu didn't move from his spot, but Nobuna had thrown herself into his bosom.

"Oi, what if someone sees? This will definitely destroy their dreams."

"....I don't care about those!"

"Nobuna, you're too loud. Calm down, this isn't a tea room."

"You are to blame!"

"Oi!"

Nobuna refuse to leave.

What's with you going to the hot springs after we had finally met!? Nobuna mumbled non-stop in Yoshiharu's chest.

"Why, why did you let Sunekosuri possess you? Was there any reason?"

"Th....That's because.... it's Kanbei's prank."

"You liar. Yoshiharu, do you have something hidden from me?"

How I wish to tell Nobuna about the Incident at Honnouji.

Wanting to tell her about the future and then find a definite safe place to hide her away.

But Yoshiharu suppressed this urge.

Nobuna is far too smart. If he had told her about the Incident at Honnouji, she will definitely starting thinking who is the culprit, and get troubled over this. Finally, she

will become suspicious of everyone and developed a wall between her and the retainers, causing her future to go in a bad direction.

But, if it's the current Nobuna.... She might just surpass my "prediction".

What should I do?

No, wait. If I want to make a decision, I should discuss it with Kanbei, Hanbei and Goemon first.

It hasn't happen yet.

It may not happen in the future too.

Even if I can't do it alone, I have companions that I can share my secrets with.

Just like changing Hanbei's fate, Nobuna's fate can be changed too, theoretically speaking.

(I'm an idiot anyway. So I should discuss it with Kanbei, hanbei and Goemon first, and then find a chance to talk to Nobuna. Nobuna had to get over Matsunaga Hisahide's death, so even if I tell her the future, she won't say a thing like executing me.)

Right now, I should just tell her half of the truth and apologize to her.

Yoshiharu caressed Nobuna's cheek and said softly by her ear.

"I want to maintain some distance with you for a period of time, since the rumors are spreading."

"Huh? Because of such a reason? .... Are you an idiot...? "

"Yeah, I'm an idiot. This won't happen again, forgive me, Nobuna."

"Still acting? Can our relationship be hidden just by that monkey brain of yours? There should be other reasons, right? Like cheating with that Yamanaka Shikanosuke or something!"

"No...Not at all. Will I ever do anything harmful to you ? Please forgive me!"

"Hmph. How can I believe you who always don't reject Juubei firmly when she's forcing marriage on you."

"I had done so all the while. It's just that Juubei-chan has a little problem with facing the reality."

"Really? You kissed Juubei a few times already. Even more than you kissed me, right? Unforgivable!"

"Those are the times when I lost consciousness and was suddenly attacked by her. Though I'm someone who like girls like Tokichirou-jii-san, but there's only one that I want to kiss... Uhh.."

"....Hmm..."

"....No....Nobuna...."

"....."

An unexpected strike, Yoshiharu was hit in the face.

Who could have thought that....

Nobuna would actually initiate a kiss.

I don't want to seperate from her.

Just like a baby bird wanting food from it's mother...

This emotion, this feeling can not be told in words.

His brain was total blank.

This is a battlefield tent, everyone is nearby. If I don't maintain clear-mind right now, Nobuna's Tenka Fubu will be all for naught.... Though Yoshiharu tried his best to maintain his mind, but he was still immersing herself into the delicate body of Nobuna who was kissing him, making him shout in his heart, "Don't endure it anymore, just push her down!".

I love Nobuna. Though Nobuna did not say it out, but her body was telling him about her feelings. Nobuna... I... ..!

"....No....buna..."

"....Ha...."

Nobuna shifted her lips, gasping for air.

Blushing and panting, a big drop of tear suddenly dropped from Nobuna's eyes.

Happiness, sadness, anger and bliss.

Different types of emotions were exploding in Nobuna's small body.

What a pair of beautiful eyes, Yoshiharu gasped.

"Hey Yoshiharu. Why can't we be joined together, why ?"

This is the rule of this world that has nothing to do with us.

Yoshiharu thought truthfully.

"We can."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I'm serious."

"Really, really?"

Yoshiharu was so agitated that his body trembled as he said.

"Yeah, I... love Nobuna. I will never give you... to anyone."

"....Really? Though even if it's a lie, I'm still happy."

"It's no lie. I love you, love you the most."

It's not enough. Just by words, it isn't enough. Yoshiharu felt sad suddenly.

"Just saying isn't enough to convince me, show me proof."

Nobuna was having the same thinking.

Yoshiharu kissed the Nobuna who was waiting for his reply while closing her eyes.

We have finally taken a step forward. Yoshiharu thought.

The both of them had started on the path with no return.

Everything is meaningless now.

Just once...

Even if this is the last time...

Just like this...

Right here...

Let's do it. When their lips were once again entwined together, they decided.

"They aren't here... Don't tell me Nobuna-sama had went to flirt with Senpai?"

"Where did she run off to, Hime-sama?"

Yoshiharu and Nobuna was forcefully pulled back to reality.

Abandoning their companions, rejecting the reality is something they can't do.

To not let the dream of Tenka Fubu go to waste, they have to prepare the opportunity, time and location that they can do it.

The next time, we must prepare a secret place that Juubei-chan can never disturb, a secret yet perfect place for the both of us to meet.

Yoshiharu caressed Nobuna's cheeks and said with his eyes.

"Hmmm.... As expected, we can't do it in the tent, Yoshiharu."

"Yeah, Juubei-chan and Katsuie are near already, the two most troublesome persons.

"Yeah, if I go back late, the ones that mind the most are those two. It's ok if it's Riku but Juubei won't be easy to handle, what a headache."

With a little hint of reluctance, Nobuna kissed Yoshiharu's lips lightly and separated herself from him.

".....Let's end it here today, I've decided to return to Azuchi."

"Oh, Azuchi castle, right?"

"Before you return to Harima from Arima, come over then. If it's there, we don't have to worry about others disturbing us."

"Has the construction of the Tenshu been completed?"

"It's still early, but we can stay in the Honmaru tower.

"I see."

"That's it then, come back earlier to see me, ok?"

"Yeah, I will be early."

"It's a promise."

"....Love you, Nobuna."

"Ok, if I'm empty headed and disturbed again, those two will be able to see through it, hehe."

Nobuna laughed as she sneaked out from Yoshiharu's tent.

In the tent alone, an unexplainable unease starts to creep out from his heart.

If one was to force an explanation...

(To actually initiate a kiss, I can't imagine she is that tsundere yet timid Nobuna. Nobuna had really get over the death of Matsunaga Hisahide and became an outstanding ruler of men. The retainers are all united too.

Maybe, I won't be needed in the Oda clan soon... No, could I have been the root of trouble?)

It will... become like this.

Will it? The optimistic Yoshiharu should not have such a mindset.

But what's lucky is...

When Yoshiharu walked out the tent, he had totally forgotten about this.

"What's the rush for, Saru? You can finally be together with Aneue, is it really okay if you don't spend a night with her?"

Because he was suddenly lectured by Nobusumi who did not have to attend the military meeting and was strolling outside.

"Shhh. Don't let Juubei-chan and Katsuie heard you, I will be killed. Anyway, didn't Oichi come too?"

Yoshiharu hurriedly change the topic.

And with that, he heard an alarming truth.

"Actually, Oichi's nausea from her pregnancy has been becoming much worse. At first, I thought she was sick but it turns out to be pregnancy's nausea. So she won't be able to be on the battlefield for now. Hahaha."

"Wh.....Whatttttttt? You actually let Oichi be NTR-ed...!?"

"Damn Saru, what nonsense are you talking about? That's definitely my child without a doubt."

'UWAHH!

"Wait, with this haven't you won me by quite an amount, Nobusumi.....!?"

"Eh?"

"S....Su.... Such an enviable thing like making a child, I have not even experienced it before....!?"

"Sa....Saru, aren't you a couple with Aneue too?"

"The difference between us is miles! YOU BASTARD, TO ACTUALLY BETRAY YOUR FRIEND AND CLIMB UP THE STAIRS TO ADULTHOOD.....!?"

I cried!

The disappearance of Zenki, reunion with Kanbei and the tie when Hanbei woke up, I had not shed a tear. It's the first time that I experienced such an agonizing pain! Yoshiharu was totally dejected.

I can't take it lying down.

Though I myself have no idea why, but I just can't accept it. HOW LONELY, SO LONELY....!!!!

I...I...I had backed down at the last moment for just how many times....!!!

The cool gentleman that release his ultimate skill "I love you." to Nobuna had long since to exist.

"But, Oichi and I are husband and wife!"

"YOU BASTARD! TO ACTUALLY BETRAY MEEEEEE !?"

"Don't push me down, Saru, Uwahhh?"

"YOU ARE THE ENEMY OF ALL 21ST CENTURY OICHI FANS! MY EXPERIENCE LEVEL IS ONLY UP

TO THAT OF KISSING, JUST WHAT COLOR IS YOUR BLOOD!?"

"Uwahh, I don't understand the things you are talking about."

"Wh....When can I do it with the girl I like!? Let the end of the world come! I'm going to curse all reajuu! Bontenmaru, let me become the Antichrist!"

"Umm.... Saru, you're quite pitiful, huh...?"

Yoshiharu can no longer control his own words.

(AHHH! I'M SUPER ENVIOUS OF NOBUSUMI! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET TO AZUCHI CASTLE!)

Though he wish to shout it out like this, but he can only "WRYYYYYY!"

"Cough, what are you doing? Stop it now, Yoshiharu-san, I can't bear to witness such a pitiful thing. "

"Boys are really like monkeys."

On a namban style carriage, Hanbei and Kanbei peeked their head out and said.

"Uwahh! Don't tell me both of you saw it? Do...Don't look at me!"

"We aren't in that relationship, haha!"

"Shut up! What disgusting things are you talking about, Nobusumi!?"

Yoshiharu wasn't suitable to be troubled.

Being cheerful and keep running with all his strength, this is what Yoshiharu should be like in the Sengoku era.

At the same time, this cheerfulness and optimism had given Nobuna and the rest courage and hope.

So...

To protect Yoshiharu's smile, the world renowned twin "beis" Hanbei and Kanbei are here.

Redrawing their heads, Hanbei and Kanbei talked in a volume that Yoshiharu cannot hear.

"I'm a little uneasy, Kanbei. If we achieved Tenka Fubu , will Yoshiharu-san say, "My mission is completed, it's time for me to return to the future." Cough."

"I'm the only one who knows the method to return to the future. One of the required "tools" had already sank deep in the Dan no ura so there's no cause for concern."

"But, when the completion of Tenka Fubu is near, if the forbidden relationship between Yoshiharu and Nobuna-sama was exposed to the world, Yoshiharu-san might return to the future to protect Nobuna. Just like Matsunaga Hisahide did for Nobuna-sama, and Zenki choosing to return to the heavens for us."

"Hmph, as long as the world's top and second strategist cooperate, there's nothing impossible."

"Hehe, how Kanbei-like."

"Ah, is that so?"

Kanbei suddenly held Hanbei's hand.

".....Hanbei, the gratitude of saving Shojyomaru, I will use my entire life to pay back."

"This life of mine was saved by numerous miracles. In the end, Kanbei had tried to change my fate by going to Mount Shozan. So we did not owe each other."

"Hmph, I Simon didn't go there to save you. It's only to achieve a contribution bigger than yours so that I can have the title of best strategist."

"Cough, I've already seen through Kanbei's heart."

"Hmph.... Ah, Kanbei."

"Hmmm?"

“I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship。” ""

"So...Sorry, Kanbei, please speak in English...."

[13]

"Wasn't Simon's heart seen through by you. Then you should understand if I speak in Japanese."

"Thi.... Cough cough... Are you bullying me?"

"Here starts the true bullying!"

"Ah? There's something near my butt.... It...Itchy...."

"We still need some time to find the way to cure your illness. So you will be staying for quite a long time in the Arima Onsen, right? To not let you be lonely, I will let Sunekosuri accompany you, hehehe."

"Please take care of me, I'm looking forward to hot springs!"

"It really itches.... Pl...Please take care of me too."

"Oi oi Kanbei, don't bully Hanbei anymore. It's about time we set off."

Comes Yoshiharu's voice from the side.

Kanbei is still the same, Yoshiharu smiled on the horse .

With the golden carriage, Yoshiharu starts to head out slowly.

It's extremely rare in this sengoku era Japan, more like, this namban style golden carriage did not really fit in and was one of the belongings of Matsunaga Hisahide.

Yoshiharu feels like Cinderella sitting on the pumpkin carriage.

The flash of uneasiness had disappeared long ago.

(Good, that's how you should be.)

From the wind, one can almost hear Zenki's voice.

~Translator's Notice:

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Chapter 6 : Set Sail, For The Naval Battle!

In the Setouchi Sea there was the pirate king and his clan members.

The Murakami Navy.

A pirate corps that was born from the sea and survive with the sea.

At the back of the Mori Clan's rapid growth was their strong support.

Even though they had an alliance with the Mori Clan, the Murakami Navy did not lose it's independence as a pirate corp. It could be said to be a feeling similar to loaning the land which was useless for the pirate corps to the Mori Clan.

They had no interest in the land.

Only the sea, was the world where they lived.

The Murakami Navy's leader was the legendary " Pirate King" Murakami Takeyoshi.

"The Murakami Navy is the strongest at sea, let them properly experience this."

"Whoever is the ruler of men on land has nothing to do with us pirates."

"Alright, let us go have a big fight!"

"Hmm, Leader?"

"Where's the Leader?"

"Probably delivering a meal to the missionaries locked in the brig"

"Again? Isn't it alright to just leave him as it is?"

"Catching those missionaries was a good thing but leaving them around is such a hindrance, ah when is the ransom going to come?"

"Always clamouring for us to send him to Sakai."

The legendary "Pirate King" Murakami Takeyoshi was swinging his huge body mass as he climbed down the stairs leading to the hull of the ship.

Why would he be interested in missionaries who were captured at sea?

Although he was caught by pirates on a foreign sea, thrown into a prison where he could not see the light of day, and only given simple food and very little water, the young missionary with tinted glasses and long black hair was generally unruffled with eyes so calm he seemed to be in a church praying instead.

Even when faced with a crisis like a storm which could capsize the ship, he still sat motionless in a meditating posture.

'What an amazing foreigner,' Murakami Takeyoshi could not help but thought.

"Missionary, today's meal, Anago Meshi."

"Gracias."

One could hardly see any anger and hatred from the missionary towards the pirates who were his captors.

"Missionary, when you attempted to cross the Seto Inland Sea by boat, you did not pay the required toll. You're 100 years too early to ignore me, the King of the Setouchi Sea."

Even though Murakami Takeyoshi was in an alliance with the Mori Clan, but he still kept the unshakable belief that he was the "Pirate King" of the Setouchi Sea.

In the Battle of Miyajima that the Mori clan achieved a miraculous victory in subverting the Chuugoku Region, they had the strong support of the Murakami Navy too. [14]

After the death of his ally Mori Motonari, 'For him, I have to protect the young Mori Twins,' was what Murakami Takeyoshi thought.

Murakami Takeyoshi's huge build, grace, bravery, experience, ability, all were fitting with his name as the ' Pirate King'.

'The foreign missionary who risked his life to come to this island nation at the fringes of the world was really an interesting fellow,' As Murakami Takeyoshi held great interest in him.

"Even if you're a missionary you're no exception, when is the ransom going to arrive?"

"Please take me to Sakai."

"Sakai again? What is there exactly?"

"I came to Japan in order to meet and enlighten the queen, please sail towards Sakai."

"Shut up, I'm the captain of the ship and I'm talking to you about the ransom now."

"This ship will sail towards Sakai. It was determined by the Almighty Lord. And I will then educate Japan's queen after landing at Sakai."

Regardless how he threatens him, they did not have any effect on the missionary.

Different from the country's monks who only knew how to meditate.

"Sakai has countless Christians, there should be those among them who are willing to pay a ransom for you ... ... missionary, what's your name?"

"Cabral. Pedro Cabral."

In the darkness, a light flashed from the missionary's eyes.

"I am the new head of Japan's branch of the Domnius faction."

Beneath the quiet exterior of the missionary, lurked a ferocity.

Ordinary people would not be able to see it.

But Murakami Takeyoshi saw through it.

'A missionary with the eyes of a hawk,' he thought.

"As per God's will, I will turn Japan into a kingdom of God, and change this country for Him. Helping the queen to convert into a faithful servant of God."

The missionary spoke fluent Japanese.

Yet Takeyoshi was unable to understand the meaning of his words, a kingdom of God?

But it seemed that this trip would be full of fun.

Takeyoshi gave a hearty laugh.

"Listen up. We are about to engage the Oda Clan's Navy in battle. It's different from the battles on land, the battle will continue until one side is completely wiped out. Whether you can safely reach Sakai, will depend on how efficacious that whatever God you believe in is."

Not far from Sakai was Osaka's Honbyo temple.

The Nyankousou headquarters standing near a river delta.

They were very energetic today too, and their dried bonito was really delicious

Nanban soccer game's schedule was all in her head today too. The young leader with cat ears and tails, Kennya's comedy act had ended with a big success.

Kennya returned elated from the break room.

"Just by relying on repeating the segment of 'Glasses, where are my glasses' continuously and receiving critical acclaim ~nya. Even if Magoichi is not around, myself, Kennya-sama's popularity did not diminish in the slightest nya~."

The partner for the comedy, Saika Magoichi, rarely had time to come to Osaka due to her mercenary work requiring her to travel frequently.

So recently, Kennya let her younger sister, Kyonya with black ears and a black tail to be her partner in the comedy.

Even though Kyonya was a silent character and not suited for comedy acts, but as long as they had the strongest move in Osaka's history 'Glasses, where are my glasses?' it did not matter who the partner was.

And the incident that shocked this Honbyo temple's history happened on this day, just when the two sisters were resting in the break room together.

"... ... Aneue, it seems like something fell off nya."

Not sure if it was for cosplaying, Kyonya who was in a black cloak picked up that particular 'object' that fell onto the table.

"Nya? This is... ..."

"Onee-sama, This is a cat's ear nya."

"Nya. NYAAAAAA?!"

Kennya hurriedly touched her head.

Gone.

Something was gone.

The cat ear on the right of her head was gone.

At some unknown point in time, it fell like a withered leaf.

"NYAAAAAA? What should I do Nyaa?"

"Ah, the cat's ear on the left side, also fell off nya."

"NYAAAAAAA?!"

The Kennya who had lost both her cat ears looked like a normal human girl.

But that's not the point.

Honbyo Temple's leader was a living god.

It's precisely because they had inherited the cat god's lineage that they had natural cat ears and cat tails, a necessary requirement before they could become the leader of the Nyankousou faith.

But the cat ears that showed off this divinity (It would be better to say felinity) actually fell off!

This was not something to be joked about..

"Aneue, what should we do~nya?"

"Wh-wh-what should we do. We-we-well as long as we st...st...stick the cat ears back on my head, and do-do-don't let them fall off again, it sh-should be fi-fine nya!"

"You want to deceive the believers nya?"

"D-d-deceiving them is not the problem now nya."

"Ah, Onee-sama, your cat tail also feels loose, it feels like I can pull it off nya."

'Nyawuwu,' Kennya wailed.

"Noooooo! If even my sainted tail is gone, Kennya will completely become human, it'll be impossible to continue being the Nyankousou Temple's leader nya!"

Hastily pressing down on her tail.

Guu (Peeling Sound)

"AH! MY TAIL! MY SAINTED TAIL WAS TAKEN DOWN NYAAAAAAA?!"

"... ... Aneue, it's the end nya."

Kyonya patted her sister's shoulder.

"T-the e-e-end?"

"Nyankousou Temple's leaders occasionally had these things happen to them. Aneue's human blood was thicker compared to the blood of the cat god."

"Why doesn't Kennya know of this sort of thing nya?"

"Kyonya learnt this from Honbyo Temple's hidden books nya. Aneue's constitution had changed as she grew older, and thus became ordinary person nya."

"Nya?!"

Ah, in her interest in comedies and Nanban Soccer she didn't have the time to read books nya, Kennya lamented on her knees.

"Aneue, deceiving the believers is wrong. You should just become a normal human nya."

"Wh-wh-what's going to happen to Honbyo Temple nya."

"Aneue you are already a human, please don't add ' nya' to the back of your sentences nya."

"... ... Wuuwawa.....How did it become like this..."

"Nyankousou Temple's new head shall be me Kyonya nya."

"Eh?!"

"Only a cat god can become the Honbyo Temple's leader, there's no other way nya."

Shashasha.

Kyonya's subordinates entered the break room and helped the dejected Kennya up, attempting to bring her to the main gates of Nyankousou Temple.

"W-wait! At least let me perform on stage.....there's still the Nanban Soccer competition....."

"Nanban Soccer competitions are also going to be terminated nya."

"Kyonya?"

"I just received a letter from the Ashikaga Shogun asking us to join the fight against the Oda Clan. Honbyo temple will thus follow our first agreement and fight against the Oda Clan~nya."

"How can this...?! After we finally avoided the battle.... Kyonya, wait.....!"

"Defeating the Oda Clan which is advocating Christianity to dominate the world, and then build cat temples countrywide."

Kyonya covered her mouth with her hand and snickered.

It was a ridiculously dark laugh.

"Possessing the greatest military strength of Japan, yet only knowing how to play soccer, Aneue you were too soft nya. If this goes on, this country would be stolen by Christianity nya. We Nyankousou has to fight nya."

Looks like she genuinely wants a war with the Oda Clan.

"Magoichi! Call Magoichi here! Someone!!”

"It's a pity. Goodbye nya, Aneue."

"Kyonya nyaa~!"

Only the cat god was allowed to be the leader and monarch.

Nyankousou Temple's rules were extremely strict.

After putting on civilian clothes, Kennya was secretly chased out of Honbyo temple.

It was unclear whether the only person that she could count on, her partner Magoichi, was currently in Saika.

Being driven out from her post as the leader was something inevitable. Kyonya's view of wanting to oppose the Oda Nobuna who protected the Christians and allowed them free access from Kyoto, Azuchi and Sakamoto was understandable too. However, waging a war will always be the last resort. Oda Nobuna hated religious factions that armed themselves and participate in wars. If Honbyo Temple really fought with the Oda Clan, the ones who would suffer, would be the large numbers of the disciples of Nyankousou.

But Kennya who had already turned into an ordinary human girl was already powerless and could only lament about how had things became this way.

Is this the result of enjoying the gag of 'Glasses, where are my glasses'?

Because she had used the gag bought from Matsudaira Motoyasu, and so was abandoned by the god of comedy?

No, this common way of speaking, is without any sense of presence, my presence is so weak....!

"Sa-Sagara Yoshiharu, please stop my sister, I beg you.."

Kennya who was driven out alone was currently walking in the streets of Osaka while holding a crutch.

No one noticed this ordinary girl who had lost her characteristics and had a weak presence was actually Kennya.

Azuchi castle's Tensho was still under construction.

That was a high building unprecedented in Japan's history

Nobuna intended to live in this tower in the future.

But the tower's completion was still a long ways away.

After ending the Harima military meetings, Nobuna headed up the path from the bottom of Mt Azuchi towards the castle keep.

The Oda Clan was about to engage the Mori Clan in a decisive battle.

Even though the Mori Army retreated to Kozuki Castle, they did not have the intention to retreat from Harima.

Uesugi Kenshin had utterly defeated Shibata Katsuie in Kaga, but she did not occupy Kaga nor pursue the retreating Katsuie but instead returned to her base, Echigo.

After retreating from Kawanaka Island Takeda Shingen had barricaded herself in her room in Kai while planning her next move. While Kanto's Houjou Ujiyasu

was secretly scheming of expelling the Uesugi Clan from Kanto while Uesugi Kenshin was not around.

Therefore, Kenshin withdrawal was also partly due to thanking Shibata Katsuie's upright way of fighting and letting her escape on purpose.

The Uesugi Kenshin who took war as a form of art also had a side like this.

How Takeda Shingen, who seemed to not have given up on her ambition to enter Kyoto, would move was still not clear. Yet the Oda clan's only enemy now was the Mori Clan.

That was because....

The Kyoto Fire was caused by Matsunaga Hisahide. And Oda Nobuna had protected the Japanese Imperial Palace from Hisahide's hands.

This information already spread to Kyoto's and Sakai's citizens.

Even though how she did it was unclear, it was Hisahide who spread this information.

Hisahide had perfectly executed the meticulous plan for her death anniversary to be on the day where the Todaji temple's giant Buddha was burnt.

Even the comet streaking across the sky was used and named the 'Danjo Star'.

'Danjo. I will definitely end this chaotic era and head towards the other side of the sea.'

The Oda Clan's various armies were arranged as below.

Shibata Katsuie and Maeda Inuchiyo would once again head to Echizen and face Uesugi Kenshin.

And at Gifu, Tsuda Nobusumi will be at the helm with the Mino Three as his advisors. They will shoulder the important task of defending against the Takeda's western expansion together with Matsudaira Motoyasu.

And at Sakai, Takigawa Kazumasu will be dispatched here together with Kuuki. This is for the upcoming navy battle with the Mori clan.

Understanding the difficulty of invading Harima by land, the Mori clan would definitely mobilise the

Murakami Navy known as the strongest band of pirates in Japan. Nobuna and Mitsuhide's opinion on this point were the same.

While in Harima, besides the Sagara Corps, there was now the inclusion of the 'It's more important to help Senpai first compared to Tamba.' the Akechi Mitsude Army.

Even though Yoshiharu and Mitsuhide two combined armies did not have the numbers to engage the Mori Clan in a decisive battle, but it was more than sufficient to hold Himeji Castle to the death.

If they were to attain victory in the imminent naval battle, then Miki Castle would be compromised. Once Miki Castle fell, Harima would be conquered.

'Yoshiharu with Juubei at the frontlines fighting side by side..... Even though I'm a bit worried it should be fine. Before returning to Harima, Yoshiharu will come to Azuchi, furthermore.....'

Furthermore Nobuna shrewdly arranged for Rikyuu to be dispatched to the Sagara Corp. "This time the greatest credit goes to Saru who held off a large number of enemies with his small amount of troops. For this I've

decided to allow Saru to host tea parties. So Saru, you better study the way of tea from Rikyu." This perfect excuse was born from an idea that flashed through her head..

'Rikyu will silently help me observe Yoshiharu and Juubei and not allowing their relationship to become more intimate.....she should help me observe them properly.'

Nobuna herself returned to Azuchi. Making preparations to engage whichever faction who made a move against her, be it the Uesugi, Takeda or Mori, in a decisive battle.

If she was in Kyoto, it'd be difficult to deceive others.

It's gonna be soon.

A few more days and it'll be fine.

After sending Hanbei and Kanbei to the Arima Hot Springs, Yoshiharu will come to Azuchi.

Nobuna lay down forming a 大 with her body in the castle keep's tea room and waited for time to pass.

How long.

The passage of time, was simply too slow.

The sun simply did not seem to set.

Once again, she felt deeply about the fact that Saitou Dousan and Matsunaga Hisahide were no longer present in the world.

After returning from Harima, and by herself, such a feeling would constantly flood her heart.

Since when did this start to happen?

There was once the foolish thought of 'Even though Danjo treats me so gently, she's not my biological mother .' appearing in her mind.

Why did she have this kind of stupid thoughts?

Even if they were not blood related, Matsunaga Hisahide was Nobuna's mother too.

Being overly spoilt by her mother, soothing her pains by feeding her with many kinds of medicine, sometimes even feeling heartbroken.

However, she did not have such memories with her biological mother Tsuchida Gozen.

Remembering the times spent with Hisahide, they seemed so familiar.

If the trauma that her mother brought upon her heart could not be cured, Nobuna might have to bear the sorrow of not receiving Tsuchida Gozen's motherly love and thus being unable to love anyone else. Matsunaga Hisahide understood the scar in Nobuna's heart and thus filled up the void in her heart permanently.

So Nobuna could fearlessly take the initiative and kiss Yoshiharu.

It should be like this.

'... ... How lonely... ...'

The moment she understood how nice it was to be loved, she lost Matsunaga Hisahide.

She wanted to cry out suddenly.

She had been enduring all this while.

Even in front of Yoshiharu, she did not mention her grief of Hisahide's loss. She endured it. To prove to Yoshiharu that Oda Nobuna had already gotten over Matsunaga Hisahide's death and matured and hoping to make him relieved. Hoping to make Hisahide happy. So, she tried hard. Summoning her courage and kissed Yoshiharu.

Yet the feelings of love and hate that Nobuna held were stronger and more intense than anyone else.

To not be brought down by grief.. That's impossible.

Holding back her urge to cry...That's impossible.

But right now, there was no one near Nobuna.

Even if it was for one night.

She wanted to hug a person while wailing her heart out..

Expressing how weak she is...

In order for this sadness to not be brought over to tomorrow.

Cheering up from the grief of losing Hisahide as soon as possible.

Hoping that there was someone who could stay by her side.

"... ... Wuu ... ..."

The tears in her eyes caused the ceiling to be distorted.

Just then.

Someone entered the tea room.

"Hime, you did a good job enduring. Full Marks."

It was Nagahide.

Maintaining a smile, silently sat at Nobuna's side.

"Manchiyo, how did you get here? What about Wakasa?"

"Before the completion of Azuchi castle, I will stay here."

"But we can't leave Wakasa alone."

"Wakasa sooner or later has to be handed to suitable vassals. Yet I will remain Manchiyo for eternity."

"... ... Manchiyo."

"The position of a Daimyo controlling a country, is too heavy a burden for me. Therefore, I hope to be able to remain by Hime's side, as long as Hime permits that is."

"Manchiyo.....!"

Nobuna hugged Nagahide while crying loudly.

"Danjo died, Danjo she..." Nobuna began wailing like a baby.

When her father died, Nobuna also hugged Nagahide while crying.

'However, the me compared to then has matured a lot. Doing my best at Harima, not fooling around, retaining the attitude of someone who would conquer the world to the end, even enduring in front of Yoshiharu.'

"I'm not wrong right, Manchiyo. Danjo didn't die in vain. I... ...Became stronger, right?!"

"Of course."

"I'm so scared. But... I'm really scared. The people who I loved dying earlier than me....!"

"To think you still have these kinds of thoughts. Before I gave you full marks, seems like I can only give 10 marks ."

Nagahide used her finger and raised Nobuna's bangs.

The unchanging smile from the times she was an aide tenderly wrapped around Nobuna.

"Hime, please rest assured. I will not die. I vow that I will live longer than Hime, even if it's only for one day."

"... ...Wuu ..."

"No matter when or where I'll accompany you by your side. Besides, the current Hime is different from the time when you lost your father. The him that you've been waiting for has already appeared eh?"

"... ... Appeared... ...?"

"Correct, Sagara Yoshiharu-dono."

Nobuna nodded her head slightly.

"Hime. After Tenka Fubu is realized, all of us should go to Tsushima for the Tenno Festival. This time we'll also bring along Yoshiharu-dono."

[15]

"... ... Un."

"Let me see once again Hime and Kazumasu's cute dance oh."

"... ... Un."

"The next time you see Yoshiharu-dono, let out all your pain from losing Matsunaga Hisahide and let him spoil you."

"... ...Un, I will."

Nagahide stroked Nobuna's back and said slowly.

“Hime.

When sorrow occupies your heart, please feel free to call this Manchiyo.

Manchiyo will always be on Hime's side whatever the time it is.

Now, even though it can still be considered unfounded words.

But Hime and Yoshiharu-dono.

The time where the two of you are together, will definitely become a reality.”

Recently, in Kyoto's Rokusho river, there was a storyteller that appeared as sudden as a shooting star who attracted the attention of a large number of passers by.

If the people who knew Manmi Senchiyo saw her, they would think that she was a bishoujo modeled exactly like her.

However, their garments were completely different.

Extremely gorgeous and assertive.

The girl led a sacred deer with a shining golden Persian carpet draped on it's back.

The deer draped in luxurious and gorgeous decorations was like a colourful float on Gion Matsuri accompanied the girl, while the girl herself had a Persian carpet as a shawl draped over her shoulder, and tied a leopard skin around her waist, was smoking on a long pipe, leisurely walking.

[16]

"Flowers bloom and wither in twenty days, to the frenzied excitement of a city of people."

Suddenly, peony petals fluttered above the heads of passers-by. Reading it in storytelling tone, "Matsunaga Hisahide, confused by the shining Hisahide comet in the sky, had committed heinous crimes, and was punished by Oda Nobuna, who led a small number of troops, and is as adorable as these peonies" and was battered by the applause of the passers-by.

"It was akin to magic."

"Amazing, amazing."

"Little lady, can you tell us your name?"

The lunatics of the crowd started to cry for the girl's name.

"I don't have a name."

The girl, leading the deer at Rokusho river slowly sucked on her pipe, silently, gently, revealed a smile.

"That's right. My name is, Flower Goddess——"

The girl gazing at the peony petals floating in the sky, whispered.

No, the peony flowers had already withered.

In this chaotic era, flowers that bloomed proudly had already drifted away. The fruits produced have also been inherited. All of it was given to that particular person. [17]

Anyway, the effects of the Ranjatai were simply shocking.

It should be said to be kind-heartedness. Because she could not bear to let that young Ninja wither like thus, so in the room filled with flower goddesses, she let her drink the boiled Ranjatai.

The results were like what you have seen.

No one could have expected that she was able to continue looking at her dream with such a form.

A body with two souls dwelling in it. For the her now in this age, if one wanted an analogy, it would be the core of the fruit which was known as the 'dream'

Therefore ...

"My name is, Kashinkoji, a resident from the world of dreams."

~Translator's Notice:

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Translator's Notes and References

1. ↑ TL Note: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nio
2. ↑ TL Note:(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qi_Men_Dun_Jia) <-the same, but chinese name
3. ↑ TL Note: The way of sitting for Zen practice, " kekka-fuza" is similar to that of yoga. Namely, a person should place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh.
4. ↑ TL Note: A fox marriage is often used in Japan to describe a sun shower.
5. ↑ TL Note: I know it's friend but it sounds weird if you said that, so I reverse translate it back to Japanese.
6. ↑ (ED note: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ogura)
7. ↑ (ED note: Literally translated as Persian Comet.)
8. ↑ (ED note: Kojiki is a record of ancient chronicles of Japan, including myths and legends. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kojiki)
9. ↑ (ED note: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youkihi ; A high-courtesan in Tang Era.)
10. ↑ (ED note: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakurakuten)
11. ↑ (Translator note: its Organtino)
12. ↑ TL Rant: Sorry guys, gotta do it... Such warmth, much loli... Wow wow...

13. ↑ TL Note: Once again, Kanbei speaks in English but Hanbei requested for her to speak in Japanese. Reverse translated it, the nihongo is what I typed myself. Please edit it if it isn't right.
14. ↑ TL Note:(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Miyajima)
15. ↑ TL Note: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenno_Matsuri
16. ↑ TL Note:(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gion_Matsuri)
17. ↑ TL Note:(For the people who don't understand, it's an analogy)